

SECRET SERVICE

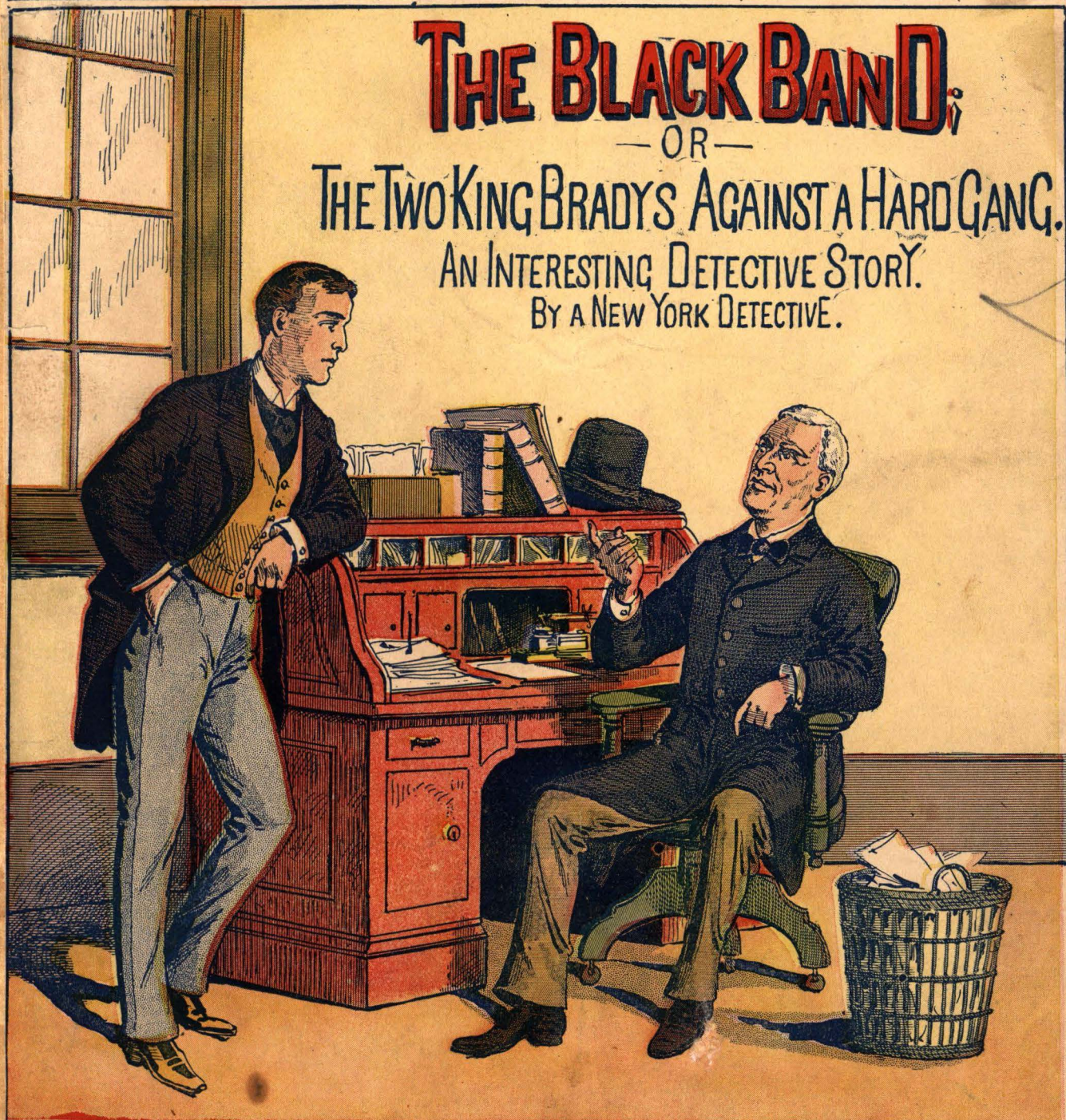
OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, by Frank Tousey.

No. 1.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 27, 1899.

Price 5 Cents.



Old King Brady, the world-famed detective, giving instructions to his faithful assistant,
"Young King Brady."

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THE BLACK BAND;

OR,

The Two King Bradys Against a Hard Gang.

AN INTERESTING DETECTIVE STORY.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

CHAPTER I.

THE MARBLE MANOR.

ALL the world knows Old King Brady.

That astute master of detective skill, shrewd, eccentric and peerless in the mastery of any mysterious case, has carried terror to the heart of many an evil-doer, overthrown countless villainous machinations, and written his name above all others on the scroll of fame.

Along Park Row in the great city of New York, his quaint figure has long been familiar. To every politician, barroom bummer, and confidence man lounging in that vicinity, the sight of Old King Brady holds a species of awe commingled with fear.

For he is the man who never fails.

No matter how difficult the case, how shrewd the mystery, how dangerous and wily the gang, he is sure to subserve the ends of justice—as sure as that the sun will rise and set each day of our natural lives.

Tall, but by no means slender of frame, with strong features beneath the wide brim of his white felt hat, with his blue coat tightly buttoned about him up to the high white collar, with its old-fashioned stock, he was an impressive figure, and when once seen not easily forgotten.

This is Old King Brady. But in a few moments in the corner of some dark alley, a lightning metamorphosis, the few changes in coat, hat and wig, and you have quite another character, whose identity with the prince of detectives you would never dream of.

Old King Brady's features were of the type familiar to the stage artist as "versatile."

That is to say they were capable of any make-up, from youth to the various types of old age.

Against such a man, the crooks of the country stood scant chance.

When once he got upon their scent, though the route might be a devious and long one, it was sure to meet with one common end, disaster to the evil-doer.

Thus we have known Old King Brady for many years.

It had ever been his custom to work alone. Never in his detective experiences had he co-operated to any great extent with another sleuthhound.

But now he had seen fit to deviate from this custom to a certain extent. With him at times was seen a strong-framed and remarkable-looking young man.

He was not quite so tall as Old King Brady, nor were his features quite as strong. But it soon became known that as a detective he was scarcely inferior to his teacher.

For this young man was Old King Brady's pupil.

He had been taken into the confidence of the old detective, and given a schooling such as no youth ever had before. While his name was also Brady, he was no blood relation of Old King Brady.

Strong and well knit but not so tall, Harry Brady's features were also of that versatile type which enabled him to easily disguise himself.

He affected a modification of Old King Brady's style of dress. He wore a slouch felt hat, but not quite so wide of brim. His coat was buttoned up closely to the neck and was of the same material, but of a little better quality and showed the natural van-

ity of youth in its immaculate smoothness and cleanliness.

In all of Old King Brady's cases now, this pupil of his figured.

They were well known at detective headquarters, but neither had any acquaintances outside. Reserve and terseness of speech characterized both.

Only it was noted that the pupil had a few tastes which differed from Old King Brady's. Of these we will speak more anon.

It was not long before the name of Young King Brady began to be quoted.

Some most astonishing feats performed by the embryo detective added to his reputation, and soon the fame of the two King Bradys spread far and wide.

At the time our story opens, there came down to headquarters a thrilling story of a dark crime and mystery at the Marble Manor, one time the country house of a millionaire on the Hudson.

It was of a peculiarly thrilling character, and at once excited the interest of many people. A deeper mystery had seldom taxed the resources of the detective force.

The Marble Manor was in its day a literal palace in its details of architecture, of construction, and of furnishings.

As the name might imply it was a structure wholly of marble.

It covered a huge tract of ground, and was cut up into numberless wings and additions. The owner had been a man of most eccentric ways and tastes, and these had been given full play in the creation of the Marble Manor.

Rooms to a number unheard of in a private house were in the manor. Some of these could only be reached from others by a labyrinth of passages.

What was more, fully a third of this wonderful palace was underground.

There were chambers and passages honeycombing the foundations like the catacombs at Rome. The eccentric builder had been a lover of mushrooms, and as these are cultivated wholly underground in dark caverns, a room for almost every species of the fungi had been made.

As can well be imagined, the Marble Manor, even when occupied by its eccentric owner, had been a subject of wonder and mystery to the country about.

All sorts of improbable yarns had emanated from such a prolific source. Strange doings were enacted at the manor, and the place was credited by many of the more credulous as being the stamping ground of Old Nick himself, who was in full collusion with the millionaire crank.

When finally the owner of the manor chanced to depart from this world of trouble, in the course of events, the estate, as is usual in such cases, became involved in endless litigation.

No one could yet claim to be its owner, and as a result it remained idle, and rapidly fell into decay.

It was partly looted of its rich furnishings.

Hoodlums broke the magnificent plate glass win-

dows, devastated the shrubbery, and raised Cain generally.

From bad to worse it went.

Then there went forth reports which at least proved a half protection.

Credulous people reported strange happenings at night there.

The flashing of red lights.

White and shadowy figures.

Blue fire, unearthly groans and shrieks, and the usual accompaniments of the full-fledged haunted house.

The ignorant shunned the manor as a pitfall of the devil. The wise would not have gone there, anyway, for it was trespass on another's property.

This was the Marble Manor and its history.

Upon the very day that the report reached the headquarters of the Secret Service Commission in New York, two men entered the office.

The chief looked up from his desk, and with a welcoming smile and nod, said:

"Old and Young King Brady, I am glad to see you."

"How do you do, chief," said Old King Brady, sinking into a chair. "It has been some time since we have called on you."

"I tell him that it is a duty he should more closely observe," said Young King Brady with a wink at the chief.

"You are right, young man," cried the chief heartily. "But Old King Brady never was much of a loungeur anyway."

"Hear that youngster," said the old detective with a guffaw. "Home birds never catch many grubs. In this world we have to be on the move. There is no use coming to headquarters unless you have some business to do. The chief is not looking for social calls."

"You are hard on me," said Young King Brady with a lugubrious smile. "I did not wish to come here to bore the chief or anything of the sort. As for loafing——"

"Tut! Tut!" laughed the chief. "You are both right enough. I am glad to see you and this visit is opportune. What luck are you having against the hard gang?"

For some time the two King Bradys had been secretly working to ferret out the den of the most noted clique of villains that ever infested Gotham, and known far and wide as the Black Band.

New York, and particularly its suburbs of Westchester County, had suffered greatly at the hands of this hard gang.

Wherever they struck, some terrible robbery or murder marked the spot.

They were no respecters of persons or property. The rich and the poor suffered alike.

Usually the burglar or robber has compassion on those of the lower class, but the Black Band were merciless.

They would cut the throat of a mendicant for his

few pennies as relentlessly as they would tap the till of the merchant or pick the pocket of the millionaire.

It was a clean sweep every time.

They had derived their designation of the Black Band from their uniform appearance.

They wore masks and black cloaks, and wherever they appeared to their victims—always after dark—the impression was instantly created that Dick Turpin and his gang had come back to earth.

Against this hard gang the two King Bradys had been working.

They had not met with very great success thus far.

The gang had proved singularly elusive, and the best efforts of the two smart detectives had been for naught.

So the answer which Old King Brady made to the chief was not encouraging.

"On more than one account I am glad you came in," said the chief. "We have here a case which has baffled all our detectives. Now, I feel sure that the two Bradys can fathom it. Do you know I have a lurking suspicion that the Black Band are in some way responsible for that crime at the Marble Manor."

"The Marbble Manor!" ejaculated Old King Brady. Then he exchanged glances with the younger detective. "Why, we have just come from there!"

The chief was astounded.

"Not direct?" he asked.

"Well, no," admitted the old detective, "but we were there yesterday morning. We looked for a clew but were disappointed."

"The crime was enacted last night," said the chief, impressively. "News reached me this morning. Here is a full account of it in my journal."

CHAPTER II.

CLEVER WORK.

OLD KING BRADY took the chief's journal and began to read it. But the chief said:

"I beg your pardon! Were you chasing the Black Band when you visited the Marble Manor?"

"A slight clew led us thither," said Old King Brady.

"Was it a good one?"

"No! We found nothing at the manor to warrant any belief that it was the hiding place of the hard gang."

Old King Brady now proceeded to read aloud the chief's notes of the Marble Manor mystery.

Thus it read:

"A dispatch from Tarrytown early on the morning of the 7th, notified us that traces of a fearful crime had been found at the Marble Manor.

"At once Detectives Judkins, Morse and Bent, with Officers Cody, Clark, and Smith, six men, were dispatched thither.

"Arrived at the manor they found a number of excited villagers and the local constable.

"Investigation disclosed shreds of clothing, a package of letters and a great pool of blood at the foot of a long flight of marble stairs.

"Upon the package of letters was the superscription of James Whittridge, a prominent New York banker. Mr. Whittridge has been mysteriously missing for two months.

"Also a broken gold ring bearing his name was found. But no trace of the body was discovered. Neither could any clew be gained as to its disposition by the murderers. No trace of them or their identity was gained.

"All is thus far a complete mystery, motive for murder unknown. Identity of murderers not revealed."

Such was the case at the Marble Manor. Old King Brady finished reading it, and was silent.

Young King Brady had been an absorbed listener.

For some while no one spoke. Then the chief finally broke the silence.

"Well, Brady, what do you think of it?"

"The man is not dead!"

"What?"

"There has been no murder."

The chief was astonished.

"No murder?" he ejaculated.

"No!"

"You surprise me. Is there not every evidence of it?"

"I see no evidence," replied the astute old detective. Young King Brady nodded his head in acquiescence.

"But the blood——"

"Bah!" said Old King Brady, coolly. "Blood does not always tell. In this case it is misleading. You may be sure that James Whittridge, the banker, is alive."

The chief drummed on the table.

"Hang you for a non-committal rogue, Old King Brady," he said, impatiently. "Why will you not explain yourself?"

"Young man," said the old detective, turning to Young King Brady, "you and I are going back to Tarrytown."

"I'm your candidate," said Harry Brady, rather slangily.

"Now," said the elder detective, turning to the chief, "I am going to tell you one thing: If a murder had been committed, the body would have been found."

"I hardly see why."

"Did you ever know the Black Band to spirit away the bodies of any of their victims? Again, if they had intended to hide the body, they would have removed the traces of the crime."

The philosophy of this assertion at once dawned upon the chief of detectives with lightning force.

He drew a deep breath.

"Brady, you are keen," he said. "I can see your point, and you are right."

"Instead," pursued the old detective, "they were very careful not to remove those traces of blood, which shows that they wished to convey the impression that the man was murdered."

The chief was spellbound.

"Therefore, the man James Whittridge is alive. Moreover, that old manor is the den of that gang of hard characters."

"You believe it?"

"I know it!"

The chief of detectives gasped.

"By the great hornspoon, Brady!" he cried, "you've got further on the case already than all the other men. Take hold of this case; you will win it."

The detective nodded dreamily.

Young King Brady whistled a tune and began making efforts to brush dust specks from his coat. It was this which brought the old detective out of his reverie.

"Stop your primping, you young dude," he said, sharply. "Before we get out of that manor again you will think more of practical sense and less of dandyism," with which he rose and started for the door.

"Heigho!" exclaimed the chief, "are you off?"

"You will hear from us again—some time," replied the old detective. "Come, Harry, we must move along. Good-day, chief."

"Good-day."

The door closed and the two King Bradys were gone.

Before the chief of detectives was to see them again some exceedingly thrilling events were to happen.

For some while after the two detectives vanished the chief of detectives of the Secret Service paced the room thoughtfully.

He puffed and chewed at a cigar alternately. At times he whistled.

"I'll bet Old King Brady knows more about that case than he told me," he muttered. "One thing is certain. If he fails it will be the first time, and the Black Band have a man against them they will not easily defeat."

Rat, tat, tat.

A rap on the door.

"Come in," said the chief.

The door swung open.

On the threshold stood a tall young man, with rather florid face and mutton-chop whiskers. He was dressed in a flashy plaid suit.

The chief looked at him inquiringly.

"Well, sir?" he inquired.

The visitor bowed.

"Is this the chief of the Secret Service?" he asked.

"It is."

"My name is Ladd—Anthony Ladd. I am one of the profession. My card."

The chief took the card and read:

"ANTHONY LADD,

"Scotland Yard Detective."

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "From across the water, eh? Please to meet you, Mr. Ladd. Have a chair."

The visitor sank into a chair.

"Aw, yes, thank you," he said, with the English drawl. "I'm new in America, you see, but I'm getting on to your ways vastly."

"Good," said the chief. "I suppose you have a chase over here. Now we will be very glad to assist you."

"No, aw—thanks!" replied Ladd. "You see it isn't that way quite. I got tired of Scotland Yard, to tell the truth, and I'm over here on my own hook—aw!"

The chief stared.

"Yes!" he said, quietly, trying to analyze the man before him.

"I thought I would run in and see if you could do anything for me."

"Well, I am sorry," replied the chief. "There is no vacancy at present on the force."

"Thought as much. But I'm willing to go it alone—aw, if you could post me. Great case this Marble Manor—"

Creak, whish, creak!

The door of the office swung open. Both men turned in their chairs. On the threshold stood a miserable-looking old beggar.

His bent form and hideous features were enough to shock one's senses.

Before the chief could arise he had ambled into the office with extended hand.

"Givea de poor Italiano bread," he whimpered. "Givea de penny! Helpa de poor!"

"Look here, you unadulterated essence of gali. How did you get off the Island?" began the chief. Then he checked himself.

The beggar's appearance was really pitiful.

The chief's hand went into his pocket, and out came a silver quarter. He tossed it to the mendicant, who eagerly sprawled on the floor for it.

Then the chief turned his back, and Ladd did the same.

Creak, swish, creak.

The door closed. Once the chief glanced casually over his shoulder. The beggar was gone.

"Well, Ladd," he said, brusquely, "of course it is a free field. You can go on with the manor case on your own responsibility."

"But can you not aid me? Give me a clew to work on?"

"I am afraid I cannot."

"Then none of your men have a clew yet?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"One question."

"Well?"

"I hear much of two smart men over here. Aw, they call them, I think, the two King Bradys."

"Yes," replied the chief. "They are crackerjacks, too!"

"Um!" said the Scotland Yard man, in a queer, significant way. "Are they—aw, on this same case?"

"I believe they are!"

"And they have no clew?"

"I cannot say!"

"Where are they at present?"

"I am not at liberty to say!"

Ladd puckered his mouth and gave a low whistle. The chief looked up in a half vexed way at this bit of impudence.

"Is there no more I can do for you, Mr. Ladd?" he asked, shortly.

"I—aw—am much indebted," replied Ladd, rising.

"I hope I have not bored you."

"Oh, no!" replied the chief.

"I may come again?"

"At your pleasure!"

"By the way?"

"Yes?"

"If I hit on any important clew would you be glad to have me turn it over to you?"

The chief stared.

"That is unusual," he said. "It would be of more value to you."

"Well, I wish to make a return for the favor you have shown me, in giving me full and free permission to undertake this manor case on my own responsibility."

"You are impudent!" said the chief, hotly.

Ladd was now at the door.

"*Au revoir*, sir," he said, and was gone.

If ever the chief of detectives was surprised in his life, he was now.

"Well, I'm blowed!" he ejaculated; "that is the coolest piece of humanity I've met in many a day. Anthony Ladd, of Scotland Yard! Well, if he was on my force I'd have him disciplined."

The chief turned in a startled manner.

A curious grating sound came to his hearing. It came from behind his desk.

In a stride he was there.

To his amazement, he saw a ragged figure lying on the carpet. A grotesque swollen face looked up at him.

It was the mendicant.

Fire flashed in the chief's eyes.

"You cantankerous rascal!" he yelled; "get out of here before I boot you out! I gave you money. What are you doing here?"

"Have de mercy, Americano! Good signor, mucha kind to poor Italiano."

The nondescript scrambled to his feet.

He turned his back to the chief and made some queer passes with his hands across his face. When he turned again the chief gave an astounded cry.

"Old King Brady!"

It was the famous detective.

How he chuckled and grinned.

"You know me?" he said.

"Know you!" gasped the chief. "Well, of all disguises! But what brought you back? Are you working a joke on me?"

"Not a joke," said the old detective.

"What then?"

"Did you not know that fellow?"

"His name is Ladd."

The old detective chuckled.

"He is the man who knows more about James Whittridge's fate than any other living person. His disguise was clever, but not clever enough for me. He is Melburne Jayne, the nephew of the missing banker, and I am possessed of the information, *bona fide*, that he is in league with the Black Band."

"Great guns!" gasped the chief. "This is a day of days! What is his reason for getting rid of his uncle?"

"He means to compel him to sign a will which give all his millions to him, Jayne. After that—short shift for the old man."

The chief was aghast.

"But what induced him to come here in such a disguise? His purpose?"

The old detective made a grimace.

"As plain as the nose on your face."

"That is a riddle."

"I will be plain. It was his purpose to draw you out and learn if possible if we had any of us the slightest inkling as to the real fate of Whittridge. In the guise of a detective he thought you would be confidential."

"The infernal rogue!"

"Yes, that's what he is!"

"But, why do you let him slip away now? Why don't you shadow him? I would not lose his track."

Old King Brady coolly took a bite of a rich plug of tobacco.

"That's all provided for," he said.

"How?" asked the chief.

"Young King Brady will attend to that," said the old detective, as he proceeded to doff his disguise.

CHAPTER III.

WORKING IN THE DARK.

THE scene of our story must now change.

We will take the reader without preliminaries to the Marble Manor.

That structure has been described in a previous chapter, so it is not necessary to do it here.

It was a dark night.

There was no moon, and the clouds hung heavy in the heavenly canopy.

To the casual observer the manor house would have seemed a single black pile, outlined dimly against the blackness of the night.

But to a man lying low in a clump of shrubbery, fifty yards from the manor, it was at times the source of a peculiar glimmering light.

It was this same manifestation which had given the old mansion to the superstitious the reputation of being haunted.

But the man in the shrubbery was not of the kind to fear the supernatural. He remained there watching and listening.

Again and again the light glimmered, and gleamed in a desultory way. Several times the listener thought he heard a low, dull murmur like voices.

Then the light seemed to vanish entirely. All was blackness.

With this the watcher rose swiftly and silently. He drew back from his hiding place and placed two fingers between his lips.

The cry of a night owl went mournfully up on the night air.

That was all.

There was no reply to the apparent signal, nor did he seem to expect one.

He, however, crept boldly up to the corner of the Marble Manor nearest. Here he stood a moment.

And as he stood, there came gliding along in the gloom toward him another figure.

They came up to each other, and each pressed the other's hand.

But not a word was spoken audibly.

Though a conversation was carried on and in an unusual fashion. This was with the fingers and palms of the hands.

Each understood the other.

"They are here!" said the larger man.

"You saw the light?"

"Yes."

"Where are they now?"

"They have gone below."

"Shall we enter?"

"Yes."

This was the conversation—just this and nothing more. Old King Brady and Young King Brady, for they were the two prowlers, now boldly crept along the side of the mansion.

In a few moments they reached a window from which a sash had long been absent.

Young King Brady grasped the ledge and skillfully pulled himself up over it and into the blackness beyond.

Old King Brady followed.

They were now in the haunted house.

All was pitchy darkness about them.

They stood quite still for some while and listened, but no sound came to their ears.

In this move they had been as silent as death. This was necessary.

After awhile Old King Brady drew something from his pocket. It was a small and peculiar lantern.

Held to the marble floor, it illumined only that space beneath it, and was not visible to anybody but the holder of the lantern.

This enabled the detectives to creep along the floor without the danger of stepping into some pitfall or colliding with some object.

Slowly the course over the marble floor was begun.

Ever and anon they placed their ears to the floors and listened. Then they kept on.

Both knew the importance of the utmost caution and stealth.

They were against a hard gang, a clique of ferrets, and the methods employed to corner them must be of the keenest.

After what seemed an interminable period they came to a door. This led into a corridor beyond.

Old King Brady knew that it was of no use to waste time in the upper part of the mansion.

The gang, if anywhere, were far underground. So down these marble stairs the two sleuths crept.

At the bottom they paused and again the dumb alphabet with the hands was used.

"What now?" asked Young King Brady.

"We must separate."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"But——"

"No but about it. You take one of these passages, and I will take the other. Between now and morning we will meet at the old oak down by the river. Be there before sunrise or we may be spotted."

"All right," agreed Young King Brady.

Then they separated.

Let us follow Old King Brady.

The old detective proceeded along the passage which he had chosen. For some distance he kept on cautiously.

Then he came to another flight of marble stairs.

Down these he crept, and was now in the fungi cellars of the mansion. All this while he had heard or seen nothing.

An hour passed.

The detective had conducted his explorations steadily and carefully. He was not altogether sanguine of success.

Others had essayed this same thing and had failed. Smart detectives had shadowed the mansion by day and night without success.

But there was a chance of securing a clew, and Old King Brady was looking for his chance.

Another hour passed.

He was lying in a passageway connecting with one of the fungi rooms. The ground beneath him was cold and damp. It made his rheumatism twinge.

It is said that everything comes to those who wait.

Old King Brady was no exception to this rule. Something did come his way.

Suddenly his keen ears caught a peculiar sound.

It might have been the slight passage of a current of air through the passage. It might have been the passage of a bat winging its way through the corridors.

But it was not either of these things to Old King Brady's best belief.

It was the swish and soft footfall of some person traversing the passage ahead. In an instant the old detective was keenly on the alert.

Down he sank with his ear pressed to the ground. He listened well, and for a long while.

Then like a cat he was upon his feet and crept forward. His passage was absolutely noiseless.

His hands came in contact with the blank wall some distance from where he had started.

He felt along the stone surface. His senses had

not deceived him. His fingers encountered what felt like a small steel hook projecting from the wall.

"Eureka!" he muttered, "I have it."

He pressed on the hook, and a section of the wall moved back.

An aperture large enough to admit the passage of a man's body was created.

Old King Brady's keen ears had heard things which led him unerringly to this discovery.

The swishing sound and the light footfalls had proceeded to this point. Then they ceased, and he heard the slight grating of the marble block as it moved beneath the metallic springs.

His intuition had led directly to the spot. He had passed one goal post on his route to discovery, which all other detectives had not been able to gain.

It was but a moment's work for him to drop through the aperture.

He needed no light.

His sense of touch guided him infallibly, and in a few moments he was creeping along a secret passage which he felt sure would lead him to the goal of his desires.

Cunning Old King Brady!

The evil doers little reckoned upon the success of this invincible old man. He was against a hard gang, it was true, but this did not disconcert him.

Along the passage he crept.

And now he heard the hum of voices.

His keen delight was beyond comparison. He kept along beside the wall, and then crouched down to listen.

He had arrived at the dividing of the ways.

One of these passages turned to the left and the other to the right. Which should he take?"

For a moment Old King Brady was in doubt. Then he became conscious of a thrilling fact.

Some being, unseen and unknown, and for aught he knew, intangible, was close by his side.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DEN OF ROBBERS.

It is hardly necessary to dilate upon the sensations experienced by the prince of detectives.

He remained just as motionless and silent as death. He knew that a great peril threatened him.

He could feel it in his nerves, could sense it, but still could not see nor hear anything.

Only the sense of intuition told him that something was by his side. Had Old King Brady been other than a fearless man he might have felt his blood grow chill.

But fear was not a part of his system. He had faced death in too many forms too many times.

But he knew that the unknown also knew of his presence.

There must be a collision sooner or later.

That the unknown was a foe, and doubtless one of the Black Band the old detective felt sure.

He was undecided whether to await attack or make the attack himself.

While thus undecided, an incident occurred which changed the face of matters, and at once endowed him with a new determination.

Suddenly a coarse laugh and jest was heard far down the right hand corridor.

A flash of light was seen, and a tall figure came hurrying through the passage. He passed so near to Old King Brady that his clothes actually brushed him.

That it was one of the Black Band there was no doubt.

But even in that moment of supreme peril, a startling fact dawned upon the old detective.

The other occupant of the passage, the unknown of whom he had stood in fear, had also shrunk from contact with the passing member of the gang.

This made it at once patent to Old King Brady that the unknown was not one of the hard gang.

In that case he would have at once called on his compatriot and exposed the detective then and there. Instead, he seemed in as great fear of exposing himself as Old King Brady.

A hundred startling thoughts flashed through the detective's brain.

What could it mean?

Who was the unknown?

He decided to find out at once. He crept silently ahead a little and listened. Then he felt a shadow over him and strong fingers gripped his throat.

He was pinioned to the cavern floor.

Old King Brady was a strong man, but he had been taken just at the right moment. For the instant he was helpless.

A sudden startling thought came to him. Even while the fingers of the unknown were reducing him to silent insensibility, he made several touches with his hands upon the hands of his captor which he had gripped.

As he expected in an instant the grip on his throat relaxed.

Instead strong young arms embraced him a moment. Then his captor's hands seized his and telegraphed:

"Whew? this is a close call. I did not think of you."

"You young scamp;" Old King Brady telegraphed back. "You nearly ended me!"

It was Young King Brady.

Secretly the old man was pleased. The young detective had shown unparalleled skill, and had actually gotten the best of his teacher.

It was a fortunate outcome, for one might have killed the other in that dark encounter. As it was, however, no harm was done.

"How on earth did you get here?" telegraphed Old King Brady.

"The passage brought me to a hole in the wall, and I crept through it."

"You heard me, then?"

"I was tracking you!"

"You young rogue, then the passage you took

when we separated must have come right back into mine."

"Just so!"

It was easy to see that the younger detective had reached the secret entrance, just in the rear of the older.

Of course, he took the scent and kept it as we have seen.

"At any rate we have made a gain," telegraphed Old King Brady. "I think we shall be right on the gang in a few moments."

"We are in luck!"

"Indeed we are!"

"What shall we do now?"

"Go ahead!"

"Of course. You lead the way."

"All right!"

Old King Brady proceeded to do this. Every moment the sound of voices grew nearer.

In a few moments they saw an aperture in the wall.

Through this came a glimmer of light. Nearer the two detectives crept and then gazed in upon the startling scene.

A large square room was revealed. In the middle of the earthen floor was a huge oil stove, and on this meats were cooking.

A case of liquor stood against the wall. Glasses were on a large box. About the stove were grouped fully a score of the toughest looking men either detective had ever seen.

They were truly a hard gang.

Every one was dressed in black, with the black shoulder cloaks. They wore masks across their eyes.

It was the Black Band.

The chamber was illumined by a huge oil lamp suspended from the ceiling.

But the interest of the detectives instantly became centered upon another object.

Against the wall, and chained to it by the ankles, was a man whose bloodshot eyes and pallid face were evidence that he had suffered extremely.

It was James Whittridge, the banker.

That he had been the victim of great suffering was apparent.

His features were drawn and pinched and his frame attenuated. There were bloodstains on his person.

Old King Brady felt of his companion's hand.

"We've got them!"

"Sure!"

"Looks bad, don't he?"

"Indeed, yes!"

"If we don't clean this gang out now we are foolish. I would like to encourage that poor fellow."

The shadow was such in the entrance that old King Brady could stand there and not be seen by the gang, while the prisoner could see him.

Of course it was risky, but old King Brady knew the importance of giving the prisoner hope.

So he stood in the aperture and revealed himself to the prisoner.

Whittridge's face instantly lit up and his lips moved, but an admonishing gesture from the old detective restrained what might otherwise have been an outburst.

Only an instant did Old King Brady venture to reveal himself.

But this was sufficient.

Whittridge was another man.

He saw that an effort was being made to rescue him, and that his rescuers were even near at hand.

Only those who have been imprisoned as the banker was now can realize what such a ray of hope means.

Old King Brady shrank back into the gloom.

He at once sought Young King Brady's hand and telegraphed:

"I want you to leave here at once."

"Well?"

"Take the first telegraph station and wire the chief of the Secret Service in cipher."

"Yes."

"Tell him to send forty men here at once and surround this house. It must be done silently and quickly."

"But you——"

"I am going to stay here!"

"The risk!" began Young King Brady.

"That is not to be considered. Somebody has got to be here to let the men into the place. I can do that."

"If you are discovered——"

"I've had my day, young man. I am ready to die, but you have a future before you. Go and make it."

"If anything should happen to you I'd quit the profession."

"Pshaw! Don't be soft," replied Old King Brady, nevertheless giving the young detective's hand a warm pressure.

It would look as if the two detectives were upon the eve of a great victory.

Certainly they had the villains placed, and it only remained to skillfully corral them.

But the best laid plans of detectives as well as of mice, go "aft alee," and so it was now.

For, before Young King Brady could start upon his mission a shrill whistle resounded through the passage. In an instant every man in the chamber was on his feet.

The two detectives had barely time to crouch behind the stone door. The Black Band, like veritable wolves, came rushing out.

In an instant they bounded down the corridor.

Excited voices were heard.

"What's the matter, Jed Dune?"

"Did you give the alarm?"

"I did!"

"What's the matter?"

"Matter enough. We're betrayed!"

"What?"

"Can't you see? The secret entrance is wide open."

A chorus of excited cries went up.

Old King Brady remembered that he had not been able to close it behind him. But this was because he had not been able to find the spring on the other side.

"Who came in last?" roared a savage voice.

"Muggie Mansur!"

"You're a liar, Jake Sunda!"

"You call me a liar? You'll die?"

A scuffle was heard, blows and the sound of falling bodies. Then the same savage voice roared:

"Back, every dog of ye! Thar's no time to fight now. Ther man who came in last was the man who left it open. Mebbe that's all there is to it."

"Good for you, Ike Partland!" roared the crowd.

"But fer all that, every corner of this place must be searched. Close the entrance, and if there are any rats in this trap we want 'em."

A cheer went up.

"Dead men tell no tales."

And down through the passage came the blood-thirsty gang.

The two Bradys had heard every word.

They knew that they were in a trap. The sensation was a thrilling one.

For a moment their faces blanched.

Both knew what it meant full well to fall into the hands of the Black Band.

Detectives were the lawful prey of these wretches, and death, swift and certain, must be the result.

CHAPTER V.

OFF THE SCENT.

Down the passage came the bloodthirsty crew.

Of course the two King Bradys did not stand still and take the knife like oxen in the shambles.

They meant to make an effort for their lives, and if driven to it a most desperate fight.

The odds were against them twelve to one. That is to say, it was one man against twelve.

But superior mental force sometimes whittles such mighty odds down to nothing.

The two detectives did not remain where they were.

Instead, they made a dive into the recesses of another passage. But the one exit was all that was known to the Black Band.

Therefore, they did not count on any interlopers escaping by any other way.

But chance favored the detectives.

They presently felt their way into another chamber. Here they had resolved a stand.

The Black Band had stored in this place many of their effects and much of their plunder. It was in fact a sort of storehouse.

Old King Brady flashed his lantern upon the scene and took in the situation. He made a dive for some barrels.

"Get in here, Harry," he said, hurriedly. "They will make a barricade for us. We can pick off every man as he comes in at the door."

And old King Brady set his lantern's rays towards the door, and at the same time pulled his revolvers.

For it was a case of life or death. It was the lives of the detectives against those of the Black Band.

It is not difficult to assume which was the most valuable.

Old King Brady was resolved to give the hard gang a lively battle, anyway.

Down the detectives sank upon the floor of the chamber. They could hear the shouts and curses of the searchers.

In a few moments they must reach the store chamber and see old King Brady's lantern.

The climax would then have been reached. What followed would depend upon the outlaws alone.

But suddenly Young King Brady gave an exclamation.

"By Jove!" he cried. "There is a hole here. One of my legs has broken through the floor of this place."

"What!" exclaimed Old King Brady, and flashed his lantern upon the spot.

Sure enough, beneath Young King Brady there was an aperture in the earthen floor. The dirt had yielded and the young detective had sunk to his waist.

"By ginger!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "Crawl out, Harry, and let's see what that is."

The young detective complied.

The aperture was deep indeed. Old King Brady was not able to reach the bottom of it with his arm.

He did not hesitate, but flashed the rays of his lantern down into it. He gave an exclamation of surprise.

"Harry!" he said, sharply, "we are saved!"

"The deuce you say!"

"It is true!"

"But——"

"What?"

"How do you make it out?"

"Look down here! You see the brick arch of a passageway. It was doubtless a large drain built by the owner of this manor for the purpose of carrying off any deposit of water which might invade his mushroom cellars."

"It looks like it," admitted the young detective. "But drains are not usually made as large."

"This is a big one. It is large enough to afford us an avenue of escape anyway."

The old detective slid down into the passage. He saw that it was sufficiently high to enable him to make his way with ease on hands and knees.

This was enough.

An avenue of escape was offered. Fate had decided in their favor.

But before pursuing his way through the drain, Old King Brady directed Young King Brady to slide a barrel over the aperture.

All trace was now removed of their method of escape.

Along the drain they crept.

The light of Old King Brady's lantern showed them the way with ease.

After a while the drain trended rapidly downward.

It seemed as if they had been in the place for a week, when suddenly Old King Brady grasped the hand of the younger detective.

"Look!" he said.

Far ahead was a glimmer of light.

It was not that of a lantern or any artificial sort. It was the light of day.

A moment more and they emerged from the long underground passage.

They were under the brow of a high bank. At their feet rolled the waters of the Hudson river.

It was just sunrise and all Nature was in bloom. The birds were singing, and the breeze wafted the perfume of blossoming trees down to their nostrils.

They glanced instinctively back to the eminence full a quarter of a mile away, on which sat the Marble Manor.

"Too bad we were discovered," said Young King Brady. "We made good progress there for a time."

"You are right," agreed the old detective. "It was tough, and no mistake; but we must atone for it."

"Shall I go down to New York?"

Old King Brady hesitated.

"That would take time," he said. "While you are gone the birds may fly away."

"But if they search the cellars and do not find us, will not their fears be allayed?"

"Oh, I fear not," said the old detective. "These rascals are as shrewd as can well be imagined. It will not take very much to frighten them away; at least for a time."

"Well," said Young King Brady, positively, "they cannot have gone yet."

"Do not be too sure. If they have taken the alarm at all, they are gone by this time, young man."

"I don't agree with you."

The old detective smiled grimly.

"We don't agree on all points," he said. "That may be all right. Stick to your convictions. At the same time you don't care if I stick to mine?"

"Not a whit!" laughed the younger detective. "But what shall we do?"

The old detective was thoughtful. Then he said bluntly:

"Boy, those rascals are not up there."

"Not up there?" exclaimed Young King Brady. "What makes you think so?"

"There is no sign of them?"

The young detective was amazed.

"Did you expect to see any sign of them?" he asked.

Old King Brady said impressively:

"You may be sure that gang was in earnest in that search. They would not confine their quest to those cellars alone. Not a part of the manor or the grounds

and even the river shore, but would have been searched."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it."

The young detective was abashed.

"I wilt," he said, readily. "You are more than right. I can see the point. Then you think they discovered traces of our presence there?"

"I do!"

"Whew!" exclaimed Young King Brady. "That is too bad."

"Indeed, it is a reverse of fortunes for us, for it may lead to very serious results."

"In what respect?"

"Well," said the elder detective, slowly, "Partland and his gang may be driven to desperation and take the life of their prisoner. Of course, they know that their hiding place is exposed."

Young King Brady started up the hill.

"Where are you going?" asked the old detective.

"I am going up there to investigate."

"Then you are satisfied that my theory is right, and that they are gone?"

"Of course I am. If I had such foresight as yours I would have seen it at a glance."

Old King Brady followed the young detective up the slope.

As they approached the manor, it looked more deserted and dilapidated than ever.

The two detectives entered the place boldly. So well assured were they that the gang had fled that neither hesitated to descend to the mushroom cellars.

And there Old King Brady found the secret spring and opened the door to the outlaws' den.

It was utterly deserted.

The gang had really taken the alarm and fled. Their stores and provisions yet remained in the place.

The leave taking was of course merely a blind to learn if their hiding place was known, and if they had reason to believe it was not, doubtless they would return at some future time.

So neither of the detectives touched anything. They were satisfied with passing through the place.

"Now," said Young King Brady, as they finally emerged, "the question is, where have they gone?"

"That is what we must find out," replied the older detective.

"How?"

"We must take the next train back to New York."

The young detective looked at him penetratingly, but Old King Brady was inscrutable.

"I think I see your line of action," said Young King Brady, finally.

The old detective bent his head.

"What is it?" he asked, astutely.

"You believe the next clew can only be obtained in New York?"

"Yes."

"And you have selected the man Melburne Jayne as the victim of our labors now."

"Good!" agreed Old King Brady. "You have done well, young man."

Of course the shrewd detective knew that Partland and his Black Band were beyond his reach by this. It would be like trying to pull down the moon to locate the new retreat to which they had gone.

For the Black Band had a score of retreats.

The Marble Manor was only one of many. It was not likely they would ever return to it.

The ordinary sleuth might have wasted his time trying to track the gang from the manor by footprints and other unreliable clues.

But Old King Brady knew that this would be the quintessence of folly.

New York City was now to be his resort for the next lead, and Melburne Jayne was the man he wanted.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TWO KING BRADYS PLAY A BLUFF HAND.

AND now let us shift the scene of our narrative back to the metropolis. Thither our detectives were gone.

To be sure, they had been at first a trifle chagrined at their failure at the Marble Manor.

But pretty soon Old King Brady began to see that he had only made a beginning in the unraveling of this case.

In this tangle there were many threads. Constant developments were bringing these to light.

He did not visit headquarters of the Secret Service, as Young King Brady tried to induce him. The old detective shook his head and said:

"Not yet, young man. When I get something worth reporting, then the chief will hear from me—not until then."

"But the chief may have some clew," said the young detective.

"Humph!" and Old King Brady shrugged his shoulders.

The younger detective knew that it was of no use to continue the subject further, so he dropped it.

A few days passed.

Melburne Jayne had been reported out of the city.

Old King Brady was waiting patiently for him to return.

He knew that he would be back surely by the 14th of the month. For on that date Jayne was to spread himself as a host among his buncombe friends.

These were of a class which the ordinary respectable young man would have fought shy of.

They belonged to the rake or fast class, and were a much besotted gang.

At Sherry's, the young reprobate intended dining these friends. A private banquet hall and some vaudeville artists had been secured.

So Old King Brady knew that the best thing he could do was to wait patiently until the 14th, when he believed that he could do some effective work.

True to the old detective's predilections Melburne Jayne showed up in New York about that date.

Old King Brady saw him coasting through Madison Square in a handsome cab.

With him was one of his followers, and they both looked rakish enough. With cigars in their mouths and their cheeks flushed with wine, it was evident that they were "rushing it."

Young Jayne was doubtless building on his anticipations of future wealth, when he should succeed in getting control of his uncle's millions.

And, indeed, it looked greatly in his favor that he would succeed in doing so.

For only to the King Bradys, outside the Black Band, was it known that he was even alive.

Old King Brady watched the cab.

He followed behind it, and saw it stop before the Hoffman House.

The occupants leaped out.

They entered the magnificent barroom of that noted hostelry.

Then Old King Brady glanced across the street. A very swagger young man, with a checked suit and fine silk hat and cane, with a monocle stuck in his eye was walking leisurely along.

His gaze met Old King Brady's.

It was evident that they were acquainted.

For there was just the slightest interchange of nods, then the young swell also entered the barroom.

Old King Brady sauntered leisurely into the side street and entered by another door.

He saw Jayne and his friend drinking at the bar.

The swell young man, who seemed of their ilk stood near them lighting a cigar. Old King Brady walked toward him.

Now the old detective was a familiar figure anywhere in New York.

Almost everybody knew that tall figure, with its strong face and the iron gray hair and white felt hat with its enormous broad brim.

The young swell ceased lighting his cigar and glared at Old King Brady.

"What are you dogging me for?" he said sharply and angrily.

Everybody in the barroom heard his voice and curious glances were turned thither.

"You are likely to find out in due time, Mr. Hector Reid, forger!" said the old detective sharply.

"What!" snapped the swell. "You dare to call me a forger?"

"I will yet have the privilege of branding you such before the public."

Perhaps the most startled and interested of the barroom's occupants, were Melburne Jayne and his companion.

They turned sharply and stared at Old King Brady and young Hector Reid.

The detective did not seem to see them.

His whole attention seemed concentrated upon young Reid. The latter was the victim of ugly temper.

"You consummate old scoundrel!" he hissed, sav-

agely, "take that for your impudence! Don't you dare dog my footsteps further!"

He drew his glove sharply and smartly across Old King Brady's face.

The report could be heard through the room. It made the old detective's cheek livid.

Everybody looked for retaliation.

The old detective was big and strong enough to eat two like the dandy Hector.

His tall form towered aloft and quivered like an aspen.

It seemed for a moment as if he really meant to return the blow, but he did not.

Instead he turned his head and swept the entire room with a lofty, contemptuous gaze.

Then he turned on his heel and strode away. His tall figure passed through the door and out into the street.

Hector Reid sent a jeering laugh after him. Then he turned and saw Jayne and his companion looking eagerly at him.

"The old hound!" he cried, triumphantly. "I gave him a dose that time, and he richly deserved it. Do you know him?"

"Well," said Jayne, with a deep breath, "yes, slightly."

He and his companion exchanged glances. Hector Reid gave them an astute glance.

"I see," he said, in an undertone. "You're all right. Have something to drink?"

"Thanks," replied Jayne, "we have just indulged."

"At least smoke with me."

"All right."

Cigars were lit and Reid seemed to grow very communicative. He in fact seemed to hit Jayne's fancy.

In a few moments they were as *bon camarade* as one could imagine. Then Reid with seeming imprudence indulged in the recounting of all sorts of escapades, which soon convinced Jayne and his companion, whose name was Victor Hall, that Reid was one of the boys.

The result was that Reid joined forces with Jayne and Hall. The three then set out, in vulgar parlance, "to paint the town red."

Jayne and Hall got rather tipsy.

From place to place they went and finally rounded up at a joint in the Tenderloin. It was rather a low barroom.

Here Hall slid under the table. Jayne was maudlin, but strange to say Reid was as sober as a clock.

The truth was, he had not drank a drop of liquor.

When it was passed to him he always contrived to drop the glass, and empty the liquor in a cuspidor or into the sawdust under the table.

But all this while he had been engaged in telling escapades to Jayne, and listening to stories by the latter.

Finally Jayne reached a hand across the table and whispered.

"Reid—hic—I like you, dang me, if I don't! I'm going to bring you into our gang. It's death to the King Bradys. Will you join?"

Reid smiled in a peculiar way and replied:

"Of course I will."

"Good! We're the Black Band. Everybody knows us; but we're whoopers, we are! We've fooled the country. I tell you Ike Partland, our leader, is a peach. Then there's Muggie Mansur. Muggie is a dandy, I tell you! We're going to divide up and break up next year. There'll be a fortune for all of us—hic—you're one of us!"

"Sure!" said Reid, heartily. "When will I take the initiation?"

"Hic—hang it, you don't need any. You're all right jest as ye are. I'll swear by you. Here's my hand."

They gripped hands.

"Was ye ever in Westchester County?" whispered Jayne.

Reid was all attention.

"Yes," he replied.

"Do ye—hic—know White Plains?"

"Yes."

"There's an old tavern there, kept by Jed Dune. He's one of us. That's our rendezvous just now. Got the old man there—hic—all tied up. He's got to settle big, and then I'll slit his weazen and get it all."

"Elegant!" said Reid, with a tremor. "He's your uncle?"

"Yes!"

"I've heard of the mysterious disappearance of James Whittridge."

"That's the chap. But I've another rich lay on hand now."

Reid was interested.

"Ah," he said, quietly, "what is it?"

"D'ye know—hic—I'm in love."

"Eh?"

"Ha, ha—hic, funny, ain't it? But I'm dead stuck on the prettiest society girl in New York. She is Miss Janet Pell. Ah, she's a queen, I tell you!"

"And you intend to have her?"

"Do I? Why shouldn't I?"

"Is she willing?"

"Willing? Hic! She's a regular spitfire. Set down on me like a load of bricks. No, I can't get her consent. But I'll get her just the same."

"Elegant! You're a whooper, Jayne."

"Am I? Well, you bet! Don't you reckon Melbourne Jayne, nephew of James Whittridge, is good enough for Miss Janet Pell? Imagine society item! Married: Mr. Melbourne Jayne to Miss Janet Pell. No cards! Ahem! long life and happiness!"

"But how do you expect to consummate your ends?"

Jayne gave a frightful scowl.

"Haven't I got the Black Band at my shoulder?" he said.

"Good for you! What could be more romantic

than an abduction. Quite cavalier-like. A real touch of old Spain. Oh, you brigand, I admire you."

"And I'm dead stuck on you, Reid. Hang it, come to my banquet the fourteenth at Sherry's."

"Delighted, I'm sure!"

"Here's a card. Be there and we'll make things howl. You're one of us!"

"You bet!"

"Now," said Jayne, thickly, "I think I'll go home. Will you call a carriage?"

"Certainly!"

Ten minutes later a closed brougham was carrying Jayne and Hall to their homes in a state of maudlin inebriety.

But Hector Reid walked away with the light step of the sober man. In a quiet corner of a dark alley he removed the incipient mustache and the wig.

As he emerged again into daylight despite his trig attire he was easily recognizable to a man across the street who beckoned to him.

"Harry," said Old King Brady as he came up. "What success did you have?"

"Far beyond my wildest hopes!" replied Young King Brady. "Our bluff in the Hoffman House bar-room worked like a charm. Jayne now reckons Hector Reid amongst his dearest pals and has made him a member of the Black Band."

The old detective gasped.

"He's easy," he said slangily. "What else did you learn?"

"The gang are at Dune's tavern at White Plains. There's also another dark scheme afoot concerning Miss Janet Pell."

Old King Brady listened attentively to the young detective's thrilling story.

Then he whistled, screwed up his weather-beaten features, took a bite out of a big hunk of tobacco, and said:

"Harry, this is the best day's work we've done yet!"

CHAPTER VII.

WALKING INTO A TRAP.

THE night of the great spread at Sherry's came at last. All the boon companions of Melburne Jayne were on hand.

Among them was the handsome figure of Hector Reid.

Wine flowed and toasts were given. Until a late hour the festivities went on.

Two-thirds of the party were carried home in cabs in the morning hours.

Melburne Jayne was not so drunk as not to be able to keep his equilibrium, nor were any of the others for that matter, for such things are not permitted at Sherry's.

But all had a surfeit of wine.

All except one.

This was Hector Reid.

This young man was as cool and collected as could be. As the party broke up he whispered to Jayne:

"When shall I meet with the Black Band?"

"To-morrow night!" replied Jayne. "Eleven o'clock, No.—Hester street. Go in by basement door. Say nothing."

Reid bowed and departed.

The next night, at a little before eleven, a young man carelessly turned into Hester street.

Before a certain basement door he paused. He looked up and down the street.

Nobody was observing him.

It was a proper moment, and he slid down into the basement. He opened the door and entered.

All was pitchy dark.

Just ahead, however, he saw a glimmer of light. It came from a crack under a closed door.

Hector Reid hesitated for a moment.

Then he remembered Jayne's directions.

"It must be all right," he thought. "I will go ahead."

And he did so.

He reached the door and waited a moment, listening. All was as silent as the grave.

Not a sound came from the room.

What did it mean?

It seemed odd to Hector Reid that nobody was there to welcome him. At first a faint misgiving seized him.

But the next moment he put it aside resolutely. He pushed against the door.

It yielded, and with a creak swung open.

A square cellar-like compartment was before him. But not an occupant was there.

An oil lamp burned on the top of a cask in one corner. Twenty-four kegs were arranged in a semicircle in the center of the earthen floor.

Hector Reid took all this in with a queer thrill. Then he noted a coil of rope lying across the kegs.

Also against the wall was posted a spreading notice as follows:

"No traitor can hope to gain entrance to the ranks of the Black Band. Death to detectives! Death to the spy!"

In spite of his hardihood, Hector Reid felt a cold shiver along his backbone.

"Whew!" he thought. "That comes pretty close home. Can they possibly mean that for me?"

It seemed odd, indeed, to him, that he should meet with such a peculiar reception.

Where was Jayne, who had been so cordial with him? Had he forgotten his compact?

Then with a chill Reid remembered that this had been made while in a state of drunkenness.

Perhaps he had since repented.

It was well known that the Black Band welcomed no newcomers to their ranks. That they should accept Reid on such short acquaintance was indeed odd.

Reid thought of all this.

But he remembered that he who hesitates is lost. He had crossed the Rubicon and was now prepared to stand by his chances.

So boldly and with extreme *sang froid* he entered the cellar and glanced carelessly about.

Everything was taken in in that moment by his keen glance, despite his suspicion of evil. He coolly walked to one of the kegs and sat down.

Then he heard something which sounded like a chuckle. Then the distant echo of footsteps.

A moment later from over his head he heard a scraping sound.

It was like the dragging of some heavy body along the floor above.

Then there was a groaning of wood and clanking of iron, and directly over him a huge trapdoor opened.

Reid looked up curiously, but as cool as could be.

In this trapdoor a number of grinning faces were framed. Then five or six of the Black Band dropped down almost upon him.

One of these was Jayne.

"Hello, Reid!" he said.

"Hello!" responded the disguised detective, coolly.

"Is this one of the forms of initiation?"

At this the Black Band roared.

Jayne grinned evilly.

"Enough!" he cried. "Fill the circle! Let us get down to business."

A whistle was heard, and then through the door came others of the hard gang.

They were masked in the usual fashion over the eyes and brow. Reid knew Jayne only by his bow-legs.

Each outlaw found a seat on a keg. This left Jayne and Reid standing.

The former raised his hand, and then all was silence.

"Comrades!" he said, "I have to-night to propose a new member."

"Ay!" was the reply in chorus.

"You know the usual test to which he must be subjected!"

"Ay!"

"If it be discovered that he is a traitor——"

"Death!"

"Or a detective in disguise?"

Hisses filled the air.

"Death!"

"You hear," said Jayne, coolly, turning to Reid.

"Are you willing to stand the test?"

"Certainly!" replied Reid. "I'll stand the initiation."

"Good! Now what proof have you to give us that your sympathies are with us?"

"Haven't I given you that already?"

"That don't answer the question. But I will ask another. Are you prepared to make war upon the King Bradys to the death?"

"Why not upon all detectives?" asked Reid.

"Well, allow that! Now again, what proof have you to offer that you are not Young King Brady in disguise?"

The question came like a thunderclap to the young

detective. For a moment he was taken almost off his guard.

"Eh?" he exclaimed. "That's all dod-rotted foolishness. What's the use of asking such questions?"

But even as Young King Brady said this, he saw the light in Jayne's eyes which told him that he was lost.

He was known to the gang.

How they had probed his disguise he could not even hazard a guess. Yet that it was so was certain.

In that moment a sense of fearful desperation came to Young King Brady. He saw that his situation was fearful.

They did not mean that he should go out of the place alive.

Yet not for a moment did the daring young detective lose his nerve.

To the last he affected his cool *sang froid*, but there came a moment when it failed.

"Come," said Jayne, impatiently, "if you must become one of us, you must stand the test!"

"If standing the test means insulting me," said Reid, affecting anger, "then I don't want to join your gang."

"That don't answer my question. What proof have you to offer that you are not Young King Brady in disguise?"

"Why any fool can see that!" sputtered Reid. "Do I look like him? Do I act like him?"

Jayne turned to his followers.

"What do you say, boys?" he asked. "Does he look like Young King Brady?"

"Ay!" went up the roar.

"Do you think he is that dog of a detective in disguise?"

"Ay!"

"You see," said Jayne, with a mocking smile, "the verdict is against you."

"I did not come here to be treated in such a manner as this!" expostulated Reid.

But Jayne with a lightning movement grasped one of his mutton-chop whiskers. It came off in his hand.

Young King Brady saw that the game was up. He had been led into a veritable trap. He was not sure but that the villain Jayne had known him from the first.

He had never given Jayne credit for such shrewdness.

He had proved himself even shrewder than either of the Bradys. As for Young King Brady he was never so dumfounded and outwitted in his life.

For a moment he could not speak or think or act.

He simply stood like one in a daze before his foes. They jeered and jibed and laughed at him.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jayne. "You thought you had us, didn't you? Never dreamed that we were dead onto you all the time?"

Young King Brady could not speak. He was wholly taken aback. He had never dreamed of this turn in affairs.

But he quickly recovered.

All the tiger-like courage of his nature asserted itself. Face to face with a score of sworn foes, death staring him in the face, he would not flinch.

He cast a swift glance about for a method of escape.

But even in that moment he saw it was too late. The outlaws were upon him like a pack of wolves.

In less time than it takes to tell it, he was bound and a helpless prisoner.

Young King Brady was in the power of his foes, and the most desperate, hardened men in Gotham.

CHAPTER VIII.

DUNE HAS A VISITOR.

BUT what of Old King Brady?

The old detective had left Young King Brady to pursue his *entente* with Jayne, suspecting no treachery, while he had embarked upon quite another enterprise.

This was a trip to White Plains.

He was anxious to follow up the gang which held James Whittridge a prisoner. He believed now that Jayne was in New York that a good chance would be offered to rescue Whittridge.

And this he meant to do.

It would seem like killing two birds with one stone.

He had sufficient faith in Young King Brady's ability to deal with Jayne and his gang.

He did not dream for a moment that the gang were already aware of Hector Reid's identity with Young King Brady.

If he had been aware of this, his course would have been altogether different.

So he set out for White Plains.

The tavern kept by Jed Dune in that part of Westchester County was an old relic of Colonial days.

It was said that it had once been the military headquarters of Washington, thus adding another to the long list of these notable spots.

However this was, Dune's tavern was a queer old crib.

It was certainly not kept open for the sake of entertaining summer guests, and as for the travel—that was light.

No, rumor had it that Dune solicited no patronage of that kind. That his place was tavern in name only.

But certain it was that large gangs of men were seen to go there at different times.

Also, report had it that cocking mains, dog fights, and even fistic encounters were carried off on the quiet at this resort.

It was also whispered that Dune was connected with the Black Band of robbers, and that some of the stolen spoil was at times to be found at his place.

Somewhat singularly detectives had heretofore overlooked Dune and his place.

Even now Old King Brady was induced to go thither wholly by the report gained that Whittridge was confined there.

Otherwise it might not have occurred to him to visit the place.

So it happened that one dark evening there came a resounding rap on the door of Dune's tavern.

In the main room of the place sat the proprietor himself with four or five hard-looking characters. They had been smoking and talking.

The raps on the door were not of the gentlest sort.

"Who's there?" roared Dune. "Go on your way and don't come here disturbing the peace."

"Ahoy!" a rough voice was heard. "Open up! I want a bed for the night."

"Oh, you do, eh?" chuckled Dune. "Well, go make it yourself."

"Open before I kick the door in."

Dune's face grew apoplectic.

"Bless my soul!" he gasped. "Kick the door in! Kick my door, and live to tell of it! Well, what manner of man can that be, I'd like to know?"

Furious blows came on the door.

Dune's cronies pulled out wicked-looking knives, and one of them said:

"Say the word and we'll do him for ye, Dune!"

"Hold on!" said Jed, with an oath. "I've a curiosity to see the cuss."

With which he stepped up and unbarred the door. It was slammed back directly in his face, and a huge form brushed him away like a fly.

A man of remarkable appearance burst into the tavern.

He had great heavy eyebrows and bushy beard and unkempt hair. His eyes were diamond like in their brightness.

He was dressed in rough and somewhat ragged garments, with a heavy pack hung over his shoulder.

Into the room he strode, and threw his pack into the middle of the floor with a clatter.

It contained cheap tinware.

He glared about the room.

"Fine idea, to turn a man away such a night as this!" he roared. "What do ye keep tavern fer?"

Jed Dune was fazed.

He stared at the uncouth and daring individual, who had thus ventured to invade his den.

Then he looked at his cronies.

They were equally astonished.

"What!" Dune began, fiercely. "Do ye know what tree ye're barkin' up?"

"I'll show ye in half a jiffy if ye don't get me some provender!" roared the strange guest. "My name's Jack Hemstraw and my money is just as good as anybody's else."

"But this ain't a tavern," insinuated Dune, weakly.

"It ain't a tavern?" roared Hemstraw, pulling a couple of dangerous looking revolvers out of his boot-legs. "It ain't, eh? Wall, then, I'll make it one with your permission."

In all their lives Dune and his gang had never been so taken aback.

Hard gang as they were, this Jack Hemstraw had instantly won their respect and fear.

Instinctively they recognized in him a master. His revolvers looked ugly and Dune hastened to compromise.

"All right, neighbor?" he cried. "Ye can have suthin' to eat, but I don't make a bizness of it. Where in the name of Moses did you cum from?"

Hemstraw returned his revolvers and laughed in a croaking way.

"Wall, if I told ye, ye'd know. I'm from anywhere and nowhere. But I'm Jack Hemstraw and that's enough."

Then, in a mysterious manner he shook a finger in Dune's face, and whispered:

"You'd sell yer soul for a copper cent, and I'll bet my ducats on it. I can see it in yer foxy face!"

Dune flushed angrily.

"Take care!" he gritted. "We're a dozen to one!"

"I don't keer a farthing if you are! You won't hurt me and I won't hurt you. We're birds of a feather. See? Mebbe I could show you how to pinch a comfortable ten thousand some time."

Dune's face cleared.

His cronies muttered approval.

"That's right," cried one of them. "We kain't quarrel with our own kind."

"Then it's understood?" asked the visitor. "We travel on ther same trolley?"

"All right," agreed Dune.

A slatternly woman now brought in some food.

Hemstraw devoured it in a ravenous manner. When he had glutted himself, he said:

"Mates, I ain't a mean man. Thar's some good liquid stuff in my pack, and I've got some dust. See?"

He held up a huge handful of banknotes.

The eyes of the ruffians glittered.

"I struck a good haul, and I'll give ye a chance to win some of it; bring on yer keerds; what do ye say?"

"I'm with ye!" cried Dune.

"I say," shouted one of the gang, "you're the liveliest one to strike this ranch in many a day."

Hemstraw only guffawed.

"If we'd known ye was of this sort of timber we wouldn't have barred ye out in the first place," said Dune.

"Thet's all right," said Hemstraw. "I got lines on this place back here in the town. I knew I'd hit my quality here."

"'Bout what part of the kentry did ye come from, anyway?" asked one of the ruffians.

Hemstraw placed his arms akimbo and stroked his heavy beard thoughtfully for a moment.

"I'd answer that question if it wouldn't take too long," he said. "When ye come to enumerate that I'm from all over the kentry, yew kin understand."

"Then ye're a traveler?"

"Wall, I've set foot on pooty nigh every part of the United States."

"Allus peddle that stuff?" indicating the tinware. Hemstraw's lip curled.

"Humph!" he said. "A man has got to carry a blind in this cursed kentry. Thar's so many confounded detectives dogging him!"

"Ye're right!" chimed in all.

"Hang 'em, if they'd let me alone I could make an honest living. I used to work the flim-flam game pooty well. But that's busted now. Every shopkeeper has flim-flam pasted in his hat."

The crowd roared.

"Theer's one son of his mother that I'm after," said Hemstraw, viciously. "And if I ever get a paw on him, it's all over with Old King Brady."

Even Dune joined in the approving shout.

"But we've got a layout for him now," cried Dune. "Our boss has worked up a fine card. You kin bet Old King Brady won't dog us no more."

"He won't, eh?" growled Hemstraw. "I'd like to bet ye on it!"

"I'll go ye!"

"A new hat on it."

"Done and done!"

Hemstraw puffed and blowed, and then interrogated:

"What sort of a go is it?"

Dune nodded knowingly.

"Never you mind," he said, craftily; "I'll be wearing that new hat on you all right; but whar's our card game?"

"Hold on!" roared Hemstraw. "I want to know how ye're goin' to work to do up Old King Brady?"

"You do, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, ye ain't goin' to."

Hemstraw glowered at Dune. Then he reached forward and picked him up by the waist, as a cat lifts a kitten.

Bending him over the table, he roared:

"Tell me now, or by Jumbo, I'll take yer gizzard right outen ye! Out with it! How are ye goin' to do Old King Brady?"

Dune puffed and stewed, and tried to free himself.

The other members of the gang looked threatening till Hemstraw gave them a prodigious wink.

This gave them the impression that it was all a big joke, and they only grinned and looked on.

"Yes, yes, confound ye, let go of me," begged Dune. "I'll tell ye, all right."

Hemstraw lowered the little villain and said:

"Now, don't ye give me no manner of a lie, for if ye do it's all up with ye. I want to know the truth."

"All right!" sputtered Dune. "We've made up a decoy."

"A decoy? Ha, ha! That won't work!"

"It won't, eh?"

"Naw. You can't decoy Old King Brady, he's too sharp."

"Don't ye fool yourself," said Dune, cunningly. "He won't be too sharp for this decoy, you can bet."

"What is it?"

"Wall, I don't even know myself," replied the tavern keeper. "It's a game rigged by Jayne, one of our gang."

"Jayne—a young dude?"

"Yas."

"Hum!" exclaimed Hemstraw. "I've heerd of him. All right, we'll talk it over later. Bring up your cards."

CHAPTER IX.

HEMSTRAW PLAYS HIS GAME.

ALL seemed relieved that the altercation was at an end.

One thing Hemstraw had gained, and that was the fear and respect of this ruffianly crew.

It was only by posing for a greater villain and desperado than any of them that he had done this, however.

In a few moments the card game was in full swing.

Hemstraw piled great heaps of greenbacks on the board and bet recklessly.

Sometimes he won, but more often he lost.

But he paid his losses promptly, pushing the crisp new bills across the board as if glad to be rid of them.

"Hang me!" shouted Dune, "you seem to be rotten with money. Where did you strike such a wind-fall?"

"That's my affair," retorted Hemstraw. "Play cards and win if ye can."

Then the big peddler seemed to get out of patience with the cards.

"Confound such luck!" he cried, savagely. "It won't come my way."

Dune was grinning gleefully, as were the others. Each had a goodly store of greenbacks by his pile of chips.

Surely, it looked as if they had found a sucker of a very large species. Hemstraw was being badly fleeced.

But he grew more reckless than ever.

"Thar's more whar this cum from," he yelled. "Play up! I'll keep my end up with ye yet!"

But after a while he flung his cards down and yelled:

"I know what's ther matter. I'll change ther luck now!"

Dune and his associates were in high spirits.

Surely, it was a run of luck which had brought this man Hemstraw so opportunely to their door.

And they shivered when they remembered how near they had come to turning him away.

Hemstraw, meanwhile, had opened his pack.

From it he drew a demijohn jug, with a big label on its side.

"Heigho!" he shouted. "What do ye say to that? It'll warm the cockles of yer hearts."

In a moment Dune had furnished glasses, and the liquor was poured out. It was the finest of old rum.

Dune chuckled and drained his glass. Hemstraw's was already empty. The others of the gang drank.

And with that a strange hilarity seemed to seize the gang.

Several began to shout and sing, and finally one of them fell over in a doze.

"Jericho!" gasped Dune, running a hand across his brow. "That's mighty strong liquor, mate. It goes to yer head!"

"It's keen stuff," agreed Hemstraw, with a significant smile.

Then Dune yawned and laid his head on the table. He did not raise it again.

One after another of the gang stretched out in maudlin slumber.

Hemstraw watched them.

Then he laughed softly and rose to his feet. He looked furtively about the room.

Besides the door through which he had entered there was another which led into the next room. He opened this, and saw that it contained a bed and chairs.

Beyond this was another just the same. Then he entered the kitchen of the place. The slatternly woman, who was evidently Dune's housekeeper, sat crooning by the fire.

"Here, old woman," said Hemstraw, extending her a glass; "here's some cordial for ye."

The hag took the glass, smelled the contents, and then emptied them down her capacious throat.

Hemstraw chuckled and went back.

"The coast is clear," he said.

He moved Dune's prostrate body aside and lifted a trap in the floor.

A flight of rickety steps was revealed.

He took one of the lamps and descended these. He found himself in what was apparently a vegetable cellar.

For a long time he examined the walls, passing his hand over every inch of them.

Then he gave an exclamation of satisfaction.

He had found a small hook in the masonry; he pressed on this and part of the granite wall moved back.

The underground retreat of the Dune tavern was revealed.

Here many a criminal had hid from justice, many valuable stores secured by theft had been deposited.

Hemstraw passed into this passage. He had not gone far when he heard a stifled groan.

"Prisoner," he exclaimed, in a loud, clear voice, "where are you? I am a friend come to save you."

A joyful exclamation was heard, mingled with a hasty prayer; then a voice shouted in reply:

"Heaven be praised! Is it a friend come to deliver me?"

"It is none else!" declared Hemstraw. "Where are you?"

"In a cell off the main passage."

Guided by the voice, Hemstraw kept on. It was but a few moments before he turned and entered a narrow cell door.

His light flashed upon the figure of a man fastened to the wall with iron chains.

Thin and haggard and pallid was the unfortunate wretch. It seemed as if death had almost set its impress on his features.

"James Whittridge!" exclaimed Hemstraw.

Whittridge looked at the rough man before him a moment with something like distrust.

But Hemstraw made a quick upward motion with his right hand, and swept away beard, wig and all. His smooth and strong-set features were revealed.

"Old King Brady!" cried Whittridge, with intense joy. "Oh, I am saved, saved!"

"Yes," replied the famous old detective. "You are if I can only cut those chains before those rascals come out from the influence of that drug."

The detective drew a bunch of keys from his pocket.

He inspected the lock, and found to his joy that it was only a common padlock.

He was an adept in the picking of locks.

It was an easy matter, therefore, for him to pick this one.

In a few moments, as a result, the chains were removed and Whittridge was free.

He literally fell into the arms of the detective.

"Oh, you shall be well paid for this!" he cried. "Your reward shall be great."

"Wait until we have made our escape sure," protested Old King Brady.

"Is there any doubt?"

"There are chances against us. But I think we will make it all right. Of course, this is headquarters of the gang. At any moment others may arrive——"

The old detective ceased speaking.

A chill fell upon both.

A distant sound had come to their hearing. It was a loud pounding as if someone were clamoring for admittance.

Old King Brady clutched Whittridge's arm.

"Come!" he said. "We have a bare chance. Some of the gang have returned."

"Do you believe it?"

"I do!"

Whittridge said no more but followed the old detective.

Old King Brady led the way into the cellar. He listened an instant at the trap and then doused the light.

This left them in total darkness.

"Eh, what's that for?" asked Whittridge.

"They haven't got in yet. All is dark up there, and they can't see the true state of affairs. To be caught in this cellar is death for us. We must trust to luck in getting out by them in the dark."

"All right!"

Up the ladder they went, Old King Brady leading the way.

The new arrivals were yet pounding at the door.

"Wake up, Dune."

"Let us in!"

"He sleeps like the Seven Sleepers."

These were the cries.

But Old King Brady and Whittridge were now up out of the cellar.

The detective quickly and silently closed the trap.

Then he passed in doubt.

Whither should they go?

They certainly could not unbar the door and hope to pass out by the gang. No window was available.

What was more some of the gang had already got in by a back entrance.

They were coming in from the kitchen with a light. In another moment our fugitives would be revealed.

But Old King Brady made the best of the desperate situation.

"This way, Whittridge," he whispered.

He remembered locating a closet just across the room. He reached this, opened the door, pushed Whittridge in and followed himself.

They were not a moment too soon.

The gang from the kitchen came in. The light showed the prostrate forms on the floor.

"By Jericho!" cried the leader, "they're all drunk as fish."

"Been playing cards, too!"

"Look at ther money!"

"Heaps of it!"

At this one of the prostrate men stirred. Then another did the same.

They were coming out from the effects of the drug. Dune opened his eyes and looked about him in a dazed way.

He scrambled to his feet and stared about him.

"By Jove, that was keen liquor," he said. "It made me drunk. Where have I been?"

"Drunk, Dune?" cried one of the newcomers. "We thought ye were all dead when ye didn't answer."

"Been playin' too, eh?"

All of the drugged gang now were sitting up. They recovered quickly.

"Playing?" cried one, "wall, you'd ought to have seen the money."

"Whar did ye git so much?"

"Hemstraw, he's the chap! Whar's Hemstraw?" roared Dune. "I'll bet he's drunker than any of us!"

"Hemstraw!" ejaculated one of the newcomers. "Who's he?"

"Oh, he's a chap dropped in here a short while ago, an' we did him up to the queen's taste. Eh, boys?"

"You bet!" chorused the others.

"Whar's he now?"

"Ain't he here?"

"I say!" cried one of the newcomers, with a hoarse laugh. "Is this the kind of stuff ye won offen him?"

He held up a handful of the bills.

"In course it was," cried Dune. "What of it?"

"Nuthin, only it's green goods!"

There was an instant silence.

"Green goods!" then was chorused.

"Look fer yerself!"

With an oath Dune grabbed up some of the bank notes. He examined them, and saw that they were counterfeit.

"Treachery!" he cried. "There's been a devil among us. Guard the doors! Search the place!"

CHAPTER X.

OLD KING BRADY IS WORRIED ABOUT YOUNG KING BRADY.

THE excitement over this discovery was beyond description.

For a moment a panic reigned in the robbers' stronghold.

All had dawned upon Dune in a flash. He could see now all too late how he had been duped.

Savage oaths rolled from his lips.

"Find that Hemstraw!" he roared. "He's here somewhere."

"He's probably miles from here," ventured one of the gang.

Then a thought occurred to Dune.

"Down cellar!" he cried. "Into the secret passage. The prisoner! See if he is there. We're lost if he is gone."

No second bidding was required.

Up flew the trap.

That very act saved Old King Brady and Whittridge, for the first point of exploration might have been the closet.

But all that Dune could think of was the possibility of the release of the prisoner.

Down into the cellar the outlaws went.

A loud yell of discovery came up. It was plain that they had found the entrance to the inner passage open.

Old King Brady knew that his chance had come. He whispered to Whittridge:

"When I open the door," he said, "you make a break for the outer door. Never mind me or what happens. Go!"

Back swung the door.

Whittridge dashed out, and Old King Brady after him. Three of the outlaws were yet in the room.

So astounded were they by the break, that for a moment they could not act.

This was in Old King Brady's favor.

Quick as a flash he picked up a chair and hurled it at the nearest. The fellow went down like a log.

The second sprang for him, and the third drew a revolver.

Old King Brady hurled the second man over the table, which went down with a crash.

Whittridge was now outside.

Crack!

The bullet just grazed the detective's head. He had reached the door and had pulled his own revolver.

Crack!

The outlaw's arm fell, and the pistol dropped armless. Old King Brady was a dead shot.

The bullet had shattered the villain's wrist. Then a commotion ensued, but the coast was clear.

Out the door Old King Brady sprang. Whittridge was far away in the gloom.

It is easy to imagine that a man who had been in limbo as long as Whittridge and had got his freedom would make good use of the opportunity.

He would not be easily overtaken.

But Old King Brady was close behind him.

"Hold on!" he shouted. "It's all right. They can't catch us now."

Whittridge slackened his pace. They were now some distance down the highway.

A short ways from the road was the railroad track.

The light of dawn was already breaking in the east. Old King Brady struck down a path leading to the track.

It was not a great distance to the next station, and there he knew that he could get an early train for New York.

The outlaws would not dare to follow them far. They were now sure of escape.

The joy of Whittridge was beyond expression.

"It was all the work of that devil of a nephew of mine," he declared. "He shall be punished for it."

"You mean Melburne Jayne?"

"Yes!"

"He is a bad fellow!"

"I should say so. Only think of his treating his own uncle in such a way, and I meant to leave him a legacy, anyhow."

"He wanted to anticipate your demise, or rather to hasten it," said the detective.

"I should say so. Well, he has cost me a lot of suffering. I suppose everybody thinks I am dead?"

"You are among the missing. Some few fancy that you are alive!"

"They will find that I am very much alive!"

"I trust this is the end of your troubles."

"So do I. But I mean that Melburne shall have punishment."

"He may be already in limbo."

"Ah?"

"Yes, my partner, Harry Brady, is close on his track!"

"Young King Brady! I have heard glowing reports of him. I hope that he will succeed."

"I think he will; but this is not the only affair of abduction in which young Jayne is concerned."

"Indeed!"

"It is true."

"But who else can he possibly think of abducting? His mania must be of that sort."

"Indeed, yes! Well this new object of his covetousness is Miss Janet Pell, the society actress."

"Whew! You don't mean it."

"It is true."

"But what is his motive?"

"She is an heiress. She has refused to marry him, and he will try and compel her. He thinks he is sure of his game with the Black Band behind him."

"This gang of thugs should be driven from existence."

"They shall be!"

"Good for you!"

"This very deal is their last," said Old King Brady, firmly.

"I trust you are a prophet."

"You shall see!"

By this time they had reached the railroad station. It was now daylight.

Even as they stepped onto the platform, the distant whistle of a train was heard.

It came puffing up presently and they boarded it. In less than an hour they were in the Grand Central Depot.

Whittridge's condition precluded any of his friends from recognizing him.

He was stared at by many, and they wondered where he was going with Old King Brady the detective.

But a cab was quickly found, and the rest was easy.

Whittridge was driven to his home, and there found affairs in a pretty state.

Jayne had turned the house upside down. He had assumed to be master and had discharged the old servants and hired new.

Even the plate on the front door had been removed and Jayne's name substituted.

The banker was dumfounded.

Old King Brady laughed.

"He evidently thought the game won," he said.

"Would he not be surprised to come in here now?"

"I wish he might," said the banker, devoutly.

"I share that wish."

"How would it do to rig a trap for him. Let him walk in and——"

"No use!" said Old King Brady.

"Why?"

"He has been informed before this of your escape. He will not show up around here again right away."

Mr. Whittridge took hold of affairs in his house now. Officers were called to enforce his rights.

The sway of Jayne was overthrown. The new servants were promptly discharged.

Some of the old servants were found and were glad to come back. Then the report went out with startling force of the return of the missing banker.

Reporters besieged the house.

They tried hard to get the details of the story. But Old King Brady had warned Mr. Whittridge and he kept silent.

All yet to the outside world remained a mystery.

Of course, there was an inkling that Jayne was at the bottom of all. The nephew was no longer seen in the circle of fast young men with whom he had been such a crony.

Nor was he seen anywhere.

It was reported that the police were on the lookout for him. It was known that a warrant was out for his arrest.

Old King Brady was puzzled and had even begun to grow alarmed.

He had seen nothing of Young King Brady, nor had he heard from him.

He knew that the young detective had a good case in hand, and he believed that he ought to have bagged his birds before this.

Old King Brady even ventured to visit the office of the Chief of the Secret Service.

That worthy denied having heard a word from the young detective.

"It is very queer," said the old detective. "I can hardly understand it."

"Do you think harm can have come to him?" asked the chief.

The old detective's features hardened.

"If so," he said, bitterly, "woe to Jayne and the whole gang. Not one shall be spared. I will hunt them down like the human wolves they are."

"Let us hope for the best, though!" said the chief. "Harry Brady is too good a man to lose. He is probably keeping dark for some purpose or other."

At that moment the telephone bell rang violently.

The chief went to the transmitter.

"Hello!" he shouted.

"Is that you, Secret Service?"

"Yes."

"Well, this is Police Headquarters. There is work for your men."

"What is it?" asked the chief.

"A big case in high life. Miss Janet Pell, the heiress, is missing. No clew can be found. Some think suicide and some foul play."

"It is the latter."

"You think so?"

"Yes."

"Well, put your men on the case."

"I will."

"Good-day!"

The chief hung up the 'phone. He turned, much excited, to Old King Brady.

"There is work for you," he said.

"What?"

"Janet Pell has disappeared."

A gasping cry escaped Old King Brady.

"Then harm has come to Harry," he cried. "They have killed him."

"What?" gasped the chief. "What has that to do with it?"

"Harry was to prevent that very act of abduction. He has failed, and he would not have done so if it had not been for foul play."

For a few moments the chief and Old King Brady looked at each other.

Then the chief asked:

"So you knew that the abduction of Janet Pell was premeditated?"

"Yes."

"And the abductor?"

"Is Melburne Jayne."

"What is to be done?"

The old detective rose to his feet. Something almost like a sob escaped his lips.

He turned at the door.

"When you hear from me again," he said with force, "the Black Band will have ceased to exist and Young King Brady will be avenged, or I shall be dead."

Then the door closed behind him. Old King Brady was against a hard gang truly.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SHADOWER FINDS THAT HE IS SHADOWED.

The night was inky black. Heavy clouds obscured the stars.

Beyond the glimmering rays of a wharf lantern on a pier jutting into the East river two muffled men stood at the hour of midnight.

They conversed in low whispers, and seemed to keep a watch on the sluggish current which surged by them.

"I tell you, Mansur, it's all right. Once the girl is convinced of the utter hopelessness of her case she will come to terms. At any rate, we will get a big ransom out of her."

"I tell ye, Jayne, I ain't afeard to put up any kind of a job on a man; but, condemn it, women is unlucky. Ye kain't do nothin' with 'em. Ye're sure to git the worst of it."

"Oh, that's all rot! There's a hundred thousand in this job, and you fellows must stand by me. It's a good thing."

"All your schemes are good things. Suthin' like the way yer got yer rich uncle's millions."

"Don't be a fool, Mansur. It was Old King Brady that knocked me out of that. But, confound him, I'll square with him some time."

"Wall, what do ye propose to do?"

"I've fixed the captain of the schooner, all right. It'll be a nice little cruise to the Big Sandy Key. It is an island off the Tortugas never visited by anybody, and we can keep the gal there safe from Old King Brady or anybody else."

"And then?"

"I'll bring her to terms. Trust me for that. If she don't come down handsome I'll—well, you can guess!"

"Humph! It's all right. But I don't like the job, though."

"But you've got to stand with me."

"Wall!"

"You agree!"

"What are we waitin' fer here?"

"The captain of the schooner is to meet us here. We will go out with him and look the craft over. You haven't anything against that?"

"All right!"

At this moment the chuck of rowlocks was heard.

They came from the river current. A moment later a boat shot into view in the dimness of the night.

Two sailors were at the oars, and in the bow stood a man with a boat hook.

"Belay there! Starboard, ye lubbers! Hillo, the wharf!"

"Hello, the Sarah Ann!" returned Jayne, running to the edge of the wharf. "Are you come for us?"

"I reckon," replied the man with the boat hook.

"All right, Captain Ham, we'll step right aboard."

The boat came alongside, and the two men on the wharf stepped into the boat.

Just as they did so, from behind a pile of lumber a tall, gaunt form arose.

It went to the edge of the wharf and listened. Then back it ran and disappeared under the pier.

A moment later a small boat shot noiselessly out from beneath it.

In the boat was the tall man.

Away it raced into the gloom, swiftly, noiselessly in pursuit.

Out into the river, and suddenly the dim outlines of a vessel rose to view.

It was a schooner of the small coastwise class. The first boat ran alongside the gangway.

The small boat remained far enough away to be unseen in the gloom.

Over the rail went the visitors aboard the schooner. In a short while the small boat drifted slowly down under the bow of the schooner.

It was evident that there was no bow watch on duty, or the small boat would have been hailed.

As it was, the occupant of the small boat tethered it to one of the anchor chains, and then by that same chain clambered up and aboard.

The point at which he went over the rail was very dark.

He was not seen.

Along the deck he skulked until he reached the skylight. Through this it was easy to see the interior of the cabin.

There he saw the captain and the two men, Jayne and Muggie Mansur.

"It's a bargain, mates," the captain said. "You can bring the gal aboard. I ain't axin' no questions. It's one thousand dollars cash to land ye on Big Sandy Key."

"A bargain?" cried Jayne.

"I dunno!" hesitated Mansur.

"Oh, don't be a fool, Muggie. 'It's the best job we ever struck. Mind that."

"All right!"

"It's settled, Captain Ham. When we bring the girl aboard you'll get your money."

"All right!"

With this the compact was closed.

The listener at the skylight slid back over the rail and his boat drifted away into the gloom.

A short while later Jayne and Mansur landed on the wharf.

Not ten feet from them crouched an unseen form. Both villains might have been taken then.

But Old King Brady, for he it was, had other plans.

Do his best he had been unable to locate the hiding place of the abducted girl, Janet Pell.

Neither had he been able to learn the details of the fate of Young King Brady.

He simply knew that the young detective had disappeared. But that was all.

But here was a move which promised to throw the balance of power again into his hands.

He was determined that the Sarah Ann should not take the fair prisoner to Big Sandy Key as proposed by Jayne.

The old detective hoped then and there to bag the entire party.

When Jayne and Mansur left the wharf, therefore, Old King Brady followed them.

Both were in close disguise.

But as Old King Brady was leaving the wharf he became aware of a startling fact.

He was being shadowed himself.

What did that mean?

He was not only perplexed but alarmed as well.

"It's queer!" he muttered. "I don't understand it. Why should anybody shadow me? It can't be a detective."

Then a horrible thought came to him.

Was it one of the Black Band?

Were they closer on his track than he was on theirs? Had they prepared a trap for him even as they had prepared it for Young King Brady?

Truly this was the hardest gang Old King Brady had ever been up against.

But he smiled grimly.

He would fall into no trap.

Forewarned is forearmed.

He proceeded at once to give as much attention to his shadower as to those he was shadowing.

He noted one fact.

The man shadowing him, whoever he was, knew his business well. He was certainly no novice.

But Old King Brady knew that in the Black Band there were many very sharp men.

So he did not wonder long at this.

Along the street by the wharves Old King Brady shadowed Jayne and Mansur. Then he saw them turn into an alley.

Here a pale blue light gleamed over a doorway.

Under it was the sign:

"SAILORS' RETREAT. WALK IN."

Into this place which the detective at once recognized as a drinking den the two villains went.

Old King Brady here paused.

He wished to effect a disguise, but he did not wish the party shadowing him to see it.

He waited a moment until he could place his shadower.

Then he slipped into a patch of darkness.

When he came out his own mother would not have known him. He was completely metamorphosed.

He was a perfect type of a sailor of the man-o'-wars-man type, even to the hat with its fluttering ribbon.

As he rolled into the Sailors' Retreat his disguise was perfect.

There was nothing about him in the least suggestive of Old King Brady.

A long, low bar, with shelves back of it filled with black bottles occupied the room.

Beyond was a door leading into what purported to be a dining hall, with curtained slips on either side.

One could eat his meal in one of these slips, or sip his beer and be unseen by any other person in the place.

As Old King Brady entered, a cursory glance showed him that Jayne and Mansur were not in the place, so far as he could see.

But that they were in one of the curtained slips he had no doubt.

The detective rolled up to the bar and slapped down a fifty cent piece.

"A schooner of ale, messmate!" he said, heavily.

"Ay, ay, sir," said the barkeeper, with a shrewd glance at him. "Here's to your best health!"

"I'm drinking the same to you, skipper!" replied the pseudo sailor.

The barkeeper bowed and pocketed the fifty cent piece.

The sailor drank his ale and then looked on the bar for the change. It was not there.

"Where's me divvy?" he asked.

"Eh?" ejaculated the barkeeper, with a jerk of his thumb. Then he leaned over the bar:

"Ye ain't been long ashore, Jack?"

"This hour by eight bells!"

"I see. You're not up to shore ways. Ye've had your grog an' drunk my health. It's shore manners that wipes out the score. See?"

The barkeeper leered at Old King Brady in a brutish way.

The detective felt like giving that ugly mug a punch with his fist, but he did not.

He knew that it would be policy for him to drop the fifty cents and say no more about it.

So he said:

"All the same, mate. It's a good v'yage we had and fair pay. I've had nothing but salt horse and hard tack for eight months ago. Where'll I find the mess table?"

"Anyone of those slips," said the bartender. "I'll send a duck to wait on ye. Mind ye tip her a dollar, or it's a cold meal ye'll get."

"Which is shore ways?"

"Yes, them's shore ways."

"Then it's lucky fer Jack his life's afloat. All right, skipper; let's have the mess."

With this, Old King Brady reeled toward one of the slips.

He pulled back the curtains.

Two men occupied it.

The old detective was face to face with Jayne and Muggie Mansur.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SAILOR AND THE LONGSHOREMAN HAVE A TALK.

BOTH sailors started up in angry surprise at the sailor's intrusion.

Mansur's hand went to his pistol pocket.

But Jayne restrained him.

"What do you want?" he asked, glaring at Old King Brady.

The pseudo sailor pulled his foretop.

"Axin' your pardon, mates. I didn't know this locker had an occupant. Be free and easy, lads. It's a mistake."

For a moment the two villains glared searchingly at Old King Brady.

Then Mansur said:

"All right, Mel. He's only a sailor."

"It's a mistake, eh?" hissed Jayne. "Well, go on your way, you dirty hulk, and don't trouble us again."

"That I'll be glad to do, mate," said the pseudo sailor, rolling away toward another slip.

He fumbled around with the curtains awhile and then managed to slide into the slip next to the one occupied by Jayne and Mansur.

A dissipated-looking woman came to wait on him.

He gave her the dollar as requested by the bar-keeper.

In return she brought a bad-smelling mess of cabbage, cornbeef and onion stew. It was a pottage vile enough to turn the stomach of a dog.

But the detective pretended to fall to, though not a morsel passed his lips.

Just at this moment, however, the door of the place swung open again and a man entered.

He was not quite so tall or large as Old King Brady.

He was a type of longshoreman with patched and flushed face and a slouch hat.

He lounged up to the bar and called for a drink.

Old King Brady studied him closely, and then concluded:

"He is not the fellow who was shadowing me. That's no disguise."

The old detective paid no further heed to the longshoreman.

He was listening to the half whispered conversation of Jayne and Mansur.

He made much work with his knife and fork and with his jaws, but all the while his ear was pressed close to the partition.

Every word uttered came to him.

"You think you can trust Ham?"

"Of course, I can!"

"I don't see the advantage of taking the girl to Big Sandy Key. Why not leave her at the Spuyten Duyvil house. She is safe there!"

"There's no telling how long it will take to bring her to terms. I want to force her to come to our plans. I cannot do it at the Spuyten Duyvil house."

"I see!"

"But by taking her a good ways from home to a desert isle, she will see the futility of further hope and it will break her courage."

"You're a schemer, Jayne."

"Well, perhaps so!"

"We'll have to drug her to bring her down from Spuyten Duyvil?"

"Put one of your boys on a cab. She will come along in a half stupor."

"Oh, yes, that's easy!"

"Now, I think Thursday, at nine o'clock, the best time to leave Spuyten Duyvil."

"All right."

"Let Jerry or Dick, or whoever it is, drive slowly down by the Boulevard to West street, near the Pennsylvania dock. I'll be watching and have a boat ready for the rest."

"Then the schooner will come back into the North river?"

"Yes, to-morrow."

"I say, do you suppose that confounded sailor next to us has heard anything?"

"I'll take a look at him."

Mansur stepped out of his slip and peered through the curtains. Old King Brady was absorbed in his cabbage.

Mansur made a sign to Jayne that it was all right, and both villains arose and went to the bar.

Old King Brady watched them through the curtains of the slip.

Presently they passed out into the street.

The old detective did not follow.

He consulted his watch.

"Two o'clock," he muttered. "I'll get some sleep."

He rolled out of the slip and started for the door.

The man at the bar in the longshoreman's garb, made an almost imperceptible signal.

Old King Brady reeled, and his face for a moment grew white. But that was all.

The next moment he was as cool and composed as ever.

He opened the door and passed out. The bartender was busy with his glasses.

The longshoreman followed. At a dark corner he came upon the old detective leaning against a brick wall.

"Harry!" gasped Old King Brady.

"It's nobody else," replied the young detective.

"I—I gave you up. I thought you were dead!"

"Well, I did have a close pinch," replied the young detective, "and I ought to have let you know the truth before. But it was to my advantage to keep dark, and then I did not have a good opportunity to see you."

Old King Brady was not a man given to sentiment.

But if ever he felt glad in his life to see another, it was at that moment to see Young King Brady. It seemed to him as if life had suddenly grown more valuable to him.

"By gracious!" he exclaimed. "I'm glad they didn't do you up, Harry. Come, let's go somewhere where we can talk it over."

"Come to our room."

"All right."

A half hour later the two detectives were ensconced in a comfortable apartment uptown.

Then Young King Brady told his story.

At the close of a preceding chapter we left him in a serious predicament indeed.

At the mercy of human wolves in the cellar of the Hester street den, his hopes for escape were slight indeed.

That the hard gang meant to take his life was certain.

There was no reason in their estimation why he should be spared.

In fact save Old King Brady himself, there was no one for whose life they felt a greater thirst.

The young detective gave himself up for lost.

In vain he looked for a method of escape.

Jayne and his gang of murderers fairly gloated over the success of their game.

They formed a deep circle about the room. Jibes and rough jests were hurled at Young King Brady.

He stood them with rare coolness.

"All right," he reflected. "It is your turn now. Mine may never come, but if it does—well and good."

"Ha, ha!" roared the gang. "A smart detective he is!"

"Thought he had us all bagged!"

"Wanted to join the Black Band!"

"You're a dandy!"

"Sharp detective."

"What will we do with him, boys?" yelled Jayne.

In reply one of them lifted a trap in the earthen floor. A deep shaft was revealed.

At the bottom of it a dark sluggish gleam of water was seen.

"The great sewer!" thought Young King Brady, with a chill.

Would they cast him into that?

The horror of the thought nigh impelled him to crave mercy.

To descend into that horrible sink of corruption and float for days, perhaps forever in the channels of the metropolitan sewer, was a frightful thing to contemplate.

The chance that he would come out alive was one in a thousand.

Deadly gases lurked there fatal to life. Disease and death were in that awful volume.

For a moment the wretch looked inquiringly at Jayne.

The hardened villain for a moment seemed inclined to agree to the plan. Then his face changed.

"No," he said, decidedly; "it is too quickly over. It is not a hard enough fate. We must see him die by inches."

Young King Brady drew a breath of relief.

It was not death he feared, but the horrors of a preparation for it in that awful sewer.

His head went up, and he flashed defiance at his foes.

But not for a moment was his brain idle, nor did he lose sight of one opportunity, even of the slightest sort for escape.

Jayne drew a keen knife.

"I believe I'll open a vein and let him slowly bleed to death," he said.

"There's a better game than that, pard," said one of the gang called Peso Pete. "I've seen the Mexicans do it down in the Apache country. Take yer knife and cut slits in his skin. Turn it over the knife blade and skin him like an eel."

A shout of approval went up.

Jayne's eyes danced with a devilish light.

"Good!" he gritted. "Nothing could be better than that. I'm with you. Strip the dog!"

Like hounds on the scent of their prey the gang sprung forward. But they forgot that Young King Brady was not disposed to yield without a struggle.

The young detective feigned terror.

But the moment the first outlaw came within reach, he let out one of his dexterous fists.

He was an adept boxer was Young King Brady. The blow struck the fellow on the point of the jaw.

He dropped like one dead.

The next went down.

A third went flying under the pile of kegs. A fourth turned a back somersault. This for a moment checked the assault.

"Great demons!" yelled Jayne. "What are you fellows good for? Can't you handle a little fellow like him?"

"Come and try it yourself," gritted Young King Brady. But if the villain heard the challenge he did not heed it.

Again the gang rushed at the young detective.

But in the meantime, Young King Brady had been doing some thinking.

What looked to him like a sure avenue of escape showed itself. He embraced it instantly.

He took careful measurement of the distance to the open door. This was not the one by which he had entered, but the opposite.

Then, swift as a flash of lightning, he grabbed a stool by the leg and sent it whirling toward the oil lamp.

It struck the light with a crash and instantly all was darkness.

CHAPTER XIII.

YOUNG KING BRADY FOOLS THE HARD GANG.

YOUNG KING BRADY waited not an instant after the smashing of the lamp.

Like a young bull he made a dash for the door.

In the darkness the outlaws could not tell one from another. Whoever was in his path the young detective hurled aside.

Jayne's voice rose high above all the confusion.

"Hold the doors! Don't let him get out. Strike a light."

But this was much easier said than done.

Everybody was confused and excited. Nobody could locate the doors.

Except Young King Brady.

He had marked an exact line for the opposite door

and reached it with ease. He grasped the handle and flung it open.

He found himself in a passageway. Behind him was a roar like that coming from a den of wild beasts.

Already men were at his heels. All was darkness; he could not see, but still he dashed on.

Suddenly he collided with a blank wall. It came nigh proving fatal to his chances.

For he was knocked half senseless. But still he gained his feet and kept on. Then he stumbled up some stairs.

The gang was now close behind him. Up and up he went.

Flight after flight rose before him. He heard the shout of many voices, and then he saw light above. It was the sky.

The next moment, nigh dead with exhaustion, he reached the skylight, and bursting through was upon the roof.

As far as he could see other roofs extended. He leaped to the next and ran on.

But his pursuers were now close behind him.

Jayne's voice was heard.

"Drop him, boys!"

The crack of a pistol rang out.

Young King Brady was just in the act of leaping to the next roof. He was seen to throw up his arms and vanish.

The next moment the gang reached the spot.

There was an aperture between the two roofs. Deep down in this, lodged between the two walls of brick, they saw a dark form.

"Jericho!" cried Jayne. "He is done for, boys! He'll never be found and he'll never get out of there alive. Let him stay there, and if he's alive let him die by slow starvation."

A chorus of approval came from the rest of the gang.

But at that moment a distant skylight was seen to lift, and several bluecoats appeared.

The pistol shot had been heard.

The officers were coming to investigate. There was no time to lose.

"Quick!" whispered Jayne, "back to the den, boys!"

Like shadows they flitted away.

The officers, looking about, saw no sign of trouble. They accordingly descended to the street.

But what of Young King Brady? Had he really fallen into the narrow space between the buildings, and was he thus doomed to a lingering and awful death?

It would have been such, for the two buildings were joined at each end of the air space. Therefore, he would never have been seen save in the bare chance of some one passing over the roofs taking the trouble to peer down into the gloom.

It would have been a horrible death trap.

But fate had been kinder to our young detective than that. The form seen by the pursuers in the

crevice was only a long roll of tarred roofing which had fallen down there.

It did resemble a man's form in the dim light.

But it was not Young King Brady.

The young detective at that moment was flat on his face, spent and half senseless, behind the next chimney not twenty feet away.

The bullet had struck him.

It had grazed his shoulder blade and caused sufficient pain to induce faintness.

He had been compelled to drop from this and from sheer exhaustion.

There he lay, as he believed at the mercy of his foes. He would have been, truly, had they known that he was there.

He heard all that they said and saw them depart, and if ever a fervent prayer of thanks welled from his breast it did then.

Saved!

How few know what tremendous force lies in that magic word.

Only those who have been at death's door and then escaped, can really know the full weight of its meaning.

Gradually Young King Brady's strength came back. But he had had experience enough for that night.

He made his way down from the roof through one of the many skylights. Then he found quiet lodgings on the east side.

For days he was quite ill with his wound. When he ventured forth he had decided upon a new plan of action.

He knew that his foes believed him dead.

He realized that it was greatly to his advantage to allow them to hold this belief. So he wore a close disguise, and did not even reveal himself to Old King Brady.

But he took a trip to Dune's tavern and found the place empty.

He managed to get an inkling of what Old King Brady had been doing. The return of James Whitt-ridge he knew did not wind up the case.

The Black Band still existed.

It must be rooted out and destroyed.

Moreover the abduction of pretty Janet Pell only confirmed his belief that Jayne and his pals had not played their last card.

He knew that Old King Brady was on the track of the abductors.

So he proceeded at once to become the old detective's shadow, hoping to become of service at a critical moment.

How the two detectives again met and joined forces we have seen.

Old King Brady listened with interest to this thrilling recital from the lips of the young detective.

"Harry," he said with warmth, "you have proved yourself a man. You handled yourself well."

"I tried to emulate my teacher," said Harry, with a laugh.

"I am not sure but that you outclass him. Surely I couldn't have done better. And you have luck."

"Largely that."

"But that is not all."

"Well, what are we to do now?"

Old King Brady's eyes gleamed.

"We've got them on the hip," he said.

"You think so?"

"I know it!"

"Well, I hope you're right."

"You'll see that I am. That gang is at the end of its rope. You know, of course, what they intend to do with the girl?"

"Take her to Florida."

"Yes."

"That Jayne is a scoundrel."

"Well, yes. Now, either you or I must visit that Spuyten Duyvil house on Thursday."

"Yes."

"They will take her from there at ten Thursday evening. She will be half stupefied with a drug."

"I understand."

"One of us must drive that cab."

"Drive the cab?"

"Yes!"

"But——"

"No but about it. I have it. You take the trail of the schooner's gang, and I will track Jayne and Mansur. I will either ride in that cab or drive it."

"It is agreed!"

With this the two King Bradys went to bed.

It is safe to say that they never slept better in their lives.

For a day or two the two King Bradys were quiet. Little was done save to keep close watch of the Black Band.

Then Thursday came. Early in the day Old King Brady got on track of Jayne and Mansur.

The two villains boarded a Harlem railroad train for Spuyten Duyvil.

In the seat behind them was a good-natured German. He had every appearance of just having landed in this country.

Jayne and Mansur were in good spirits.

"Then ye found the gal more pliable?" asked Mansur.

"Yes," replied Jayne, "she even tried to negotiate, but when I named the figure as half a million she wilted."

"She probably would marry you sooner than give up the half million," laughed Mansur, coarsely.

"It's all the same, for in either case I'd get it," declared Jayne.

"You're a corker, Jayne!"

"I know it!"

"You'll be holding the Prince of Wales for ransom yet."

"I'm bound to have money. I'm not done with my esteemed uncle yet."

"I hear he means to shoot you on sight."

Jayne laughed scornfully.

"He's a poor, weak old man," he said. "I ought to have dosed his cordial long ago."

"Why didn't ye?"

"Well, the deuce of it was, he had all his money willed to charity and not a penny to me."

"Couldn't ye destroy the will?"

"It's held by a law firm. I tried to monkey with them but it wouldn't work. Luck has been against me but I guess it'll change yet."

"In course. If you'd only stick to ther legitimate ye'd do all right."

"What do you mean?"

"Women! Thar's no luck in women. They're the cause of a man's ruin fust and last. You can't beat 'em. They'll git you into trouble sooner or later in spite of all you can do."

Jayne laughed scornfully.

"I'll show you that this is an except'on," he said.

By this time the train had reached Spuyten Duyvil. The fat German made a great rush for the door. The two villains grinned, as did everyone else in the car.

"He's fresh from the Rhine," said Muggie.

"If I thought he had a dollar we'd touch him fer it."

"Pshaw! Let him alone. We've got other business."

Then they alighted from the train and approached a cab, which was drawn up at the platform.

CHAPTER XIV.

OLD KING BRADY KEEPS HIS WORD BUT MEETS WITH A DISAPPOINTMENT.

THE fellow on the box of the cab looked like a good-natured Irishman, no more nor less.

He was dressed as all cabmen dress, and gave the two villains a nod of recognition.

"All right, Jerry," said Jayne, and he and Mansur leaped into the vehicle.

Slam went the door and away went the cab. But hanging on behind, by the baggage rack, was the German.

Neither those inside nor the driver noticed him.

Up a narrow lane, and toward what was once Jerome Park the vehicle was driven.

After awhile it paused before a small, frame house, some distance back from the street.

There was quite a yard in front, shut from the street by a fence and wicket gate.

The German had dropped from the baggage rack as the cab began to draw up.

He slipped behind a tree and remained there. So when Jane and Mansur alighted he was not seen.

Into the little frame house the two villains went.

The German watched them attentively. Then he looked carefully about him.

A short distance away was a thick hedge. Into it the German disappeared.

A few moments later there emerged a rather stout clerical looking man. He walked carelessly down the street by the cab.

He looked up at the driver and said:

"Can you tell me the way to the station?"

"The depot, sir? Yes, sir. Right back and turn left to your left and then right," replied the cabby.

"Can you drive me down there? I want to get at New York train. I'll give you five dollars for the job."

The cabby hesitated.

Then he looked at his watch.

"They won't be ready for half an hour," he soliloquized. "What's the use of my sitting here when I could earn an honest penny?"

Again he looked at his watch.

Then he leaned over the box and said confidentially:

"Five dollars did you say, boss?"

"Yes," replied the clerical man.

"I'll tell ye," said cabby. "I'm to wait here half an hour for two coves who are in that house. Now, I pretend to be walking my horses around. You meet me at that corner down there, hop in, and it'll all right."

"That suits me," replied the clerical man.

A few moments later the cabby drove up to the corner hurriedly.

"Jump in, boss!" he cried.

"I'd rather sit on the box with you," said the clerical man, leaping up beside the cabby.

"All right, boss!"

Down the highway the cab rattled. They turned to a wooded part of the road. No house was near. The clerical man drew out a flask, and affected to drink from it.

The cabby looked askance.

"Oh, beg pardon," said the clerical man. "Scotch whisky. Have a nip?"

"Don't care if I do."

The cabby tipped the bottle to his lips. He took a deep draught. Then with a smack he handed it back to the owner.

"Hot stuff!" he said.

"Yes, you'll think so in a minute," said the clerical man, ironically.

Suddenly the cabby's head sank and he reeled in his seat. The clerical man grabbed the reins and allowed cabby to sink onto the footboard.

Then he pulled up the horses.

Cabby was in a stupor.

The clerical man looked up and down. No one was in sight.

"Worked like a charm," he muttered. "Knock-drops are the thing."

He laid the reins down and leaped to the ground. Quickly he lifted cabby from the box, and carried him to a bit of green sward under a tree.

"He'll sleep sweetly and safely there," he said. "He won't wake for an hour. Now for the rest."

He removed cabby's coat and donned it and took his hat. Then he drew forth a pocket mirror and examined his features.

In a few moments by skillful manipulation, Old King Brady, for of course the reader has guessed

who it was, had made himself up for a counterpart of the sleeping cabby.

Back onto the box he leaped and whipped up the horses.

In a few moments he was before the door of the little frame house. It was now quite dusk.

Jayne came out on the piazza.

"Jerry!" he shouted.

"All right, sir," said the detective, simulating the cabby's voice.

"We will be ready to start in fifteen minutes. Everything is all right."

"All right, sir!"

"Have you a cold?"

"No, sir."

"What makes you so hoarse?"

"I dunno, sir."

"Well, be ready in fifteen minutes."

Old King Brady chuckled.

"I reckon Harry would stare if he knew how well I am keeping my promise to drive this cab to-night," he muttered.

And it was indeed a clever ruse which he had effected.

In fifteen minutes it had grown quite dark.

This naturally made Old King Brady feel more secure. Thus congratulating himself, he heard the door of the house open.

The two villains came out.

Between them walked with uncertain steps a woman with veiled face. That it was the abducted girl there was no doubt.

Down to the carriage door she was led. Old King Brady held it open.

She was assisted into the carriage.

Then Jayne and Mansur leaped in and pulled the curtains down.

"New York—you know where, Jerry," they said.

Old King Brady leaped on the box.

"Yes, I know where!" he chuckled.

Away rolled the cab.

Old King Brady drove across to High Bridge and Washington Heights, and on down into the city.

He had made his plans beforehand.

He knew that Young King Brady should be waiting for him at the Pennsylvania dock, with officers.

The game should be bagged then and there.

At least Miss Janet Pell would be rescued, and two of the ringleaders of the Black Band be put behind the bars.

The others could be run down later. All looked successful to Old King Brady. The detective was in high spirits.

At times he heard the men in the carriage talking. He did not venture to look around for fear of exciting possible suspicion.

It was a long drive.

Old King Brady pushed the horses along quite sharply. Their coats were quite reeking with sweat and foam.

It was late when he turned from Riverside drive into the heart of the city.

Straight downtown he drove.

Soon he turned into West street, and made his way toward the Pennsylvania docks. Of course there were stragglers on the street at that hour.

But they noted the cab only with idle interest.

They never dreamed of attaching any significance to it. Old King Brady's keen eyes were on the lookout for Young King Brady.

He was not disappointed.

He saw a number of officers at the entrance to the docks. He drove directly up to them and leaped down from his box.

"Surround this cab, men," he said, authoritatively. "I am old King Brady, the detective, and in that cab are two desperate criminals; they must not escape."

The detective tore open his coat and showed his star.

The officers instantly obeyed.

One of them tore open the carriage door.

Then a shout went up.

"She's empty!"

A stroke of lightning from a clear sky could not have been a greater shock to Old King Brady.

For a moment his tongue hung in his mouth paralyzed. He rushed to the cab door and looked in.

It was the truth.

The cab was empty.

The birds had flown.

But when and where, and how had they taken the alarm. Never in his life had the old detective been so cleanly outwitted.

"Great Jericho!" he finally gasped. "Where have they gone?"

The police officers stood about grinning. If there is anything that amuses the roundsman it is to see the wary detective, whom he is accustomed to defer to, get fooled once in awhile.

"They've given ye the slip," said one of the force.

"Are ye sure they were in there?" asked another.

But Old King Brady paid no more heed to their shafts, than a duck to drops of water falling on its back.

"Have you seen Harry Brady?" he asked.

"No, sir."

"Who sent you here?"

"Orders from the chief of the Secret Service to meet you."

"It was Harry who left that order," said the old detective. "Probably Harry is watching the schooner. It will be lively work now to head them off. One of you men take this team to a stable. That is all I need of you."

And Old King Brady vanished in the darkness of the wharves.

A small boat was just running in alongside the pier. A man leaped out and tethered the light craft. Old King Brady approached him.

"Harry," he exclaimed, "is that you?"

"Hello!" exclaimed Young King Brady, for he it was. "Did you succeed in driving that cab?"

"I did."

The young detective was astonished.

"What?" he gasped.

"It is true."

"But how did you do it? Where are the gang?"

"They gave me the slip."

"The deuce you say!"

"It is true."

Old King Brady told his story. Harry listened with interest. Then he said:

"Well, the whole game is up."

"What?"

"So far as the schooner is concerned. If Jayne and Mansur had succeeded in getting down here safely with their prisoner they would have had their trouble for their pains."

"Why?"

"Captain Ham has thrown up the job and sailed away."

CHAPTER XV.

AT GRINDLEMAN'S PAVILION.

OLD KING BRADY was astonished.

"Gone away?" he gasped. "Is that straight?"

"It is."

"But—what for?"

"Oh, he got frightened. In fact I am partly responsible for that."

"You?"

"Yes," said the young detective with a smile. "I knew it would be easier to bag the game with the schooner safely out of the way."

"Well?"

"I sent him a polite note of warning. He instantly up sail and fled."

Old King Brady was thoughtful.

"I wonder if it was possible," he muttered. "No. I saw the girl at the Supten Duyvil house."

"Ah, she is not on board the Sarah Ann, be sure of that," said Young King Brady.

"You think so?"

"I do."

"How do you suppose they got out of the cab?"

"Jumped out, probably."

"With the girl?"

"Why, certainly. Either could take her in his arms and drop out in a dark spot. That's just the way of it, and they've taken her to some safe hiding place, be sure."

"Too bad!" said Old King Brady, with disappointment.

"Why, it means that we must do our work all over again."

"Yes, but it will be harder."

"True!"

"They've fooled us, and they'll be on the lookout for us now. A subterfuge will not work so easy next time."

"I agree with you."

"It is too bad. But then," and the old detective pulled himself together, "I rather like the looks of things after all. We prevented one thing."

"The taking of the girl to Sandy Key?"

"Yes!"

"But——"

"What?"

"Why, may they not take her there yet by some other method?"

"Well, they have not done it to-night," declared Old King Brady. "Before another night we must make it our business to thwart any further attempt."

"That's right," agreed Young King Brady. "Have you any plan?"

"We might go back uptown and see if we can strike a clew. But no," rejoined the old detective with sudden inspiration, "I have a better plan."

"What is it?"

Before Old King Brady could explain his new plan, which never was explained, an unexpected incident occurred.

They were at the moment in deep shadow. Just at the far end of the wharf a man's form was seen to pass through a pathway of light.

Even at that distance Old King Brady knew him. It was like Partland.

The old detective grasped the situation.

"Harry!" he said abruptly. "Did you see that chap?"

"Yes."

"Did you know him?"

"I thought it was Partland."

"And so it was. The gang are still hanging around here waiting for Jayne and Mansur to come with the girl. Now is our chance."

"What shall we do?"

"I'll take Partland, and if the gang splits up you can take the others. See? We must not lose trace of them, for it will give us our only chance to find out where they have taken the girl."

"I see!" said Young King Brady. "It is a go!" Away the two detectives slid, like veritable shadows.

They separated, and not again that night did they see each other. Old King Brady easily got track of Partland.

He was loitering alone under a pile of wharfage. He had not been there long when two men came across West street.

A signal was made, they met and there was a hasty conference.

Then Partland slid across West street and disappeared up a street leading to West Broadway.

Old King Brady had to make a detour, and trusting to luck to strike Partland on the corner of West Broadway he went up the next street.

He ran rapidly.

When he reached West Broadway he slackened his pace.

Luck was with him.

Partland was just crossing the street. As far as Canal street the detective followed him.

Through Canal to the Bowery went the shadowed and the shadower.

It was a long walk.

But Old King Brady knew that it would not do to lose track of his man.

He had but a very slender thread now to cling to. It had been a reversal of fortunes, much to be deplored, that the villains had escaped from the cab.

But he hoped soon to atone for this mishap. All the while he was wondering what the two villains had done with Janet Pell, on leaving the cab.

Time was destined to bring a full explanation of this, however.

Turning into the Bowery Partland slackened his pace. He entered a liquor saloon and leaned over the bar talking with the bartender.

Presently Old King Brady, who was watching through the glass panel of the door, saw the bartender give Partland something which looked like a key.

Then he recognized the bartender.

His name was Fitch, and he was one of the Black Band. He had been present at the Marble Manor when Old King Brady had his lively experiences there.

The detective soliloquized:

"That's queer! What's he given him a key for? Why should Partland come away over here to get it? What new figure is this in the case?"

But before the detective could even guess at a solution of the mystery Partland came out of the saloon.

He did not see the dark form flattened in the next doorway.

He walked slowly along to the first elevated station. As he was ascending the stairs a tall man brushed past him and ascended in long jumps, evidently in a hurry to catch a train.

Partland did not notice that this man looked back at him through the panel of the door.

He never once suspected that a pursuer would act in this fashion.

When Partland boarded the uptown train, the unknown man sat in a seat close beside him.

At One Hundredth street or the station nearest that thoroughfare, Partland got out. Down One Hundredth street he proceeded.

Along the shores of this part of the East river at the time this story deals with, there were a number of summer gardens, mostly owned and kept by Germans.

Among the smaller of these was one known as Grindelman's Pavilion.

Down to the water's edge was a sort of garden, with swings and rustic seats.

There was also a small wharf, where a few pleasure boats were kept for those oarsmen who cared to risk the currents and eddies of Hell Gate.

Down to the entrance of Grindelman's Pavilion Partland went.

The small bar was open yet, and a fat man sat behind it. But the gardens and the pavilion were deserted.

In fact, the gates were closed and locked.

Old King Brady was near enough to hear the fat German say, as Partland entered:

"Mein Gott! Is dot you, Meester Partland? You geef me von surprise!"

Partland spoke to the German in a low tone of voice.

What he said Old King Brady could not hear.

But the German closed and locked the door, and then the two entered the pavilion. The detective was stumped.

It was necessary that he should follow them, and if possible hear what they were saying, and at least see what they did.

But the door was locked.

It would not do to pick the lock.

Old King Brady was, however, not one to be long without an expedient.

He proceeded shadow-like along the wall of the pavilion. Then at a point where the lattice connected with the wall, he silently climbed up.

Just as he reached the pavilion roof he was obliged to halt.

The two rogues were coming down to the garden, and in a few moments were right beneath him.

"You say your yacht, the Gretchen, is here, Grindleman?" he heard Partland ask the German.

"Sure it is dot," replied the garden proprietor. "She is moored right away down at the wharf. She is all right."

"Well, you see we've got to hide the girl away somewhere until these cursed detectives are blinded. Now, if we can put her on the Gretchen to-night, to-morrow we can take the yacht up the Sound to a small Long Island place where she will be safe. Dune knows of a lovely den up there."

The detective's blood tingled.

Things were playing into his hands again. The two men now walked away out of hearing.

But Old King Brady had heard all he wished.

He did not attempt to enter the pavilion. That was no longer his game.

Instead he carefully climbed down and went back to the street. Even as he reached it he heard the rumble of wheels.

A cab came into view rapidly driven.

The curtains were pulled close.

Down to the pavilion entrance it went, and into deep shadows at the gate.

The old detective heard a whistle and saw the gate open. Then the dim shadows of some people passing through.

The cabman turned and galloped his horses away.

The detective made no effort to stay him. He had no use for him.

His game was once more in hand.

To say that Old King Brady was elated would be a mild statement.

He made no attempt to intercept those entering the pavilion.

This would have been folly.

He was only one man against many. To call a squad of police might have done, but Old King Brady had formed a different plan.

He was piqued to think that Jayne and his gang had so cleverly outwitted him.

He was determined to retaliate.

"I wish Harry was here!" he said to himself. "I need his assistance."

But Young King Brady was not within easy reach. It devolved upon the old detective to carry out his plot alone and unaided.

CHAPTER XVI.

OLD KING BRADY EFFECTS A DARING RESCUE.

THAT Old King Brady was fully equal to this, the reader will not doubt.

He laid his plans very skillfully and very carefully. He did not mean to fail this time.

He had no doubt but that his failure as driver of the cab was due to the fact that the two villains had guessed his identity.

Certainly it was a kind disposition of fate which had put him on Partland's track. The latter had brought him to the right clew, for a certainty.

Old King Brady now took a wide detour, and gained the river shore some distance below the pavilion.

He could see the shape of the Gretchen outlined by the little wharf.

Even as he watched he saw the dim light of a lantern, and then several figures cross the plank to her deck.

"They have taken her aboard," he muttered.

A moment later a dim light shone from the window of the little cabin.

It continued to shine steadily. The detective heard voices going up through the garden.

"They have left her aboard and consider her safe," he muttered. "Oh, if I could only swim!"

But he was not long in hitting upon an expedient.

He was determined to gain the deck of the little yacht if possible.

There seemed no way to do it from the water side.

The pavilion entrance he deemed the best. He hastened to make his plan.

It was not a difficult matter to find a weak spot in the lattice. By means of gentle pressure the bars of wood were forced apart.

An aperture was made large enough for the detective to crawl through.

He was now in the garden.

It was not far to the yacht landing. Silently and shadow-like he crept down toward it.

As he reached the little plank he saw a man pacing the deck of the yacht.

That he was on guard there, there was no doubt. He was probably the engineer of the yacht and the only man on board.

The detective studied the situation.

To attempt to cross the plank openly would give the alarm and might cost him his life.

Old King Brady was too shrewd for that.

He had a better plan.

One thing was plain to him.

The man on the yacht must be disposed of in some way. He was the only barrier to the rescue of Janet Pell.

"He has got to come," muttered the old detective.

"He is my game."

Down to the edge of the plank the detective crept warily.

He was here in such shadow that he could not be seen.

Under this end of the plank he slid. Then he gripped its edges with his fingers.

He swung off into the air and began working his way hand over hand along the under side of the plank. He was thus screened from view and his fingers were an object too small to be seen.

The guard on the deck paced slowly up and down.

He did not see that dark figure clinging to the verge of the yacht's bulwark. When his back was turned cat-like and silent as death that figure went over the rail.

Old King Brady crouched in the angle of the cabin superstructure. The guard walked slowly aft.

Then he turned and came as slowly back. It was Old King Brady's chance.

Just as the fellow was opposite him he thrust one long arm out.

The strong fingers clutched the guard's windpipe. In an instant he was prevented from uttering an outcry.

There was a swift silent struggle.

He lay on the deck with Old King Brady's knees on his chest.

"Silence, on your life," whispered the old detective "or you're a dead man!"

The fellow ceased to struggle.

The detective made a gag and thrust it into his mouth. Then he bound him securely hand and foot with a hand line found on the deck.

He next carried him into the cabin and placing him in the nearest stateroom locked him in.

Then he looked about him.

He was master of the situation.

A light burned on the cabin table. Another glimmered over the glass of a stateroom door.

Old King Brady advanced and turned the key back in the lock. He swung the door back.

A striking scene was revealed to his gaze.

There reclining in a bunk, with white upturned face and drooping eyelids and glassy eyes, was a beautiful young girl.

The detective saw instantly that she was yet under the influence of the drug.

He advanced and took her hand.

"Miss Pell," he said in a low tone. "Don't get frightened. Don't scream or betray us. I am a detective come to save you. All is well."

A half stifled cry broke from the young girl's lips and she essayed to rise.

"Yes, yes. I know. You are drugged," said the detective in her ear. "But that will pass away in time. Keep perfectly quiet where you are. I will take care of you."

The helpless girl tried to whisper, but abandoned the attempt. Her face, however, showed her joy.

Old King Brady went back to the deck.

He listened intently.

He could hear voices up in the pavilion. But the coast seemed clear.

What should he do now?

It was his desire to effect the young girl's rescue. He could take her from the place and then return.

His mind was made up.

He would do this.

Back into the cabin he went.

He lifted her in his powerful arms and stalked back to the deck. Down the plank he boldly walked.

In another moment he was in the beer garden. He made his way without trouble to the aperture by which he had entered the place.

It was an easy matter to pass out, and then he carried her up the steep bank to a vacant lot above.

Only a few yards away was a street and houses.

But at that early hour it was deserted and people were in their beds. The detective was in a quandary. What should he do with his charge?

He was anxious to return to the beer garden. An idea came to him.

Carrying the girl in his arms he walked boldly down the street. He had hoped to find a roundsman.

But beyond the next corner he saw a blue light burning.

"A druggist!" he muttered. "Just the place!"

In a few moments he had reached the door of the drug store. The night clerk was at his desk.

The detective opened the door and stalked in.

The clerk came out from behind his desk in a hurry.

"What's this?" he cried. "Somebody in trouble?"

"Look here," said Old King Brady, impressively. "This young lady has got to have help. She is worth millions and you will be well repaid. I want her to have the best of care. Where is your private room?"

"This way," said the clerk, with alacrity. "I will call up Dr. Smith. A case of the heart?"

"No, a stupefying drug. She has been in the hands of villains. Now you will understand how important it is for you to keep close guard over this lady. Do you see?"

"Y-yes!" stammered the clerk.

Old King Brady showed his star.

"I am a detective of the Secret Service," he said further. "All will be explained later. Keep her here until I call for her. My name is James Brady."

The clerk stared.

"You are Old King Brady?"

"Sometimes I am called that."

"You may be sure I'll look after her," declared the clerk. "Have no fear, Mr. Brady."

The detective left the drug store hurriedly. Back to the beer garden he went.

To him the rest seemed easy.

He meant to bag his game that night. How he succeeded we shall see.

When he reached the break in the lattice, he hastened to push his way through it.

He was quickly in the beer garden again. All was quiet on the yacht.

He could hear voices yet in the pavilion. It was plain that the rescue of Janet Pell had not yet been discovered.

"That's all right," he muttered. "Nothing could have worked better."

Like a shadow he made his way up toward the pavilion. Passing into it he saw his game just beyond, in an adjunct of the barroom.

There, Jayne, Mansur, and the German Grindlemann were engaged in drinking beer and conversing. Partland was not there.

"Queer!" thought the detective. "Wonder where he has gone!"

He was enlightened later.

The conversation of the villains was conducted in a low key, so the old detective was compelled to draw quite near.

He reclined flat on the floor of the pavilion, and worked his way in the shadows snake-like to the door of the barroom adjunct.

Then at an unobserved moment it was easy for him to slip behind the open door.

He was now within twenty feet of the villains, and could almost have heard a whisper.

"I think it's the best thing we can do to concentrate and lie low for awhile," Jayne was saying.

"Well, I reckon," agreed Mansur.

"Ach Himmel, I neber deed hear of any detective like dat Old King Brady," asseverated the German.

"Well, he'll do us yet," said Jayne. "See what a close call we've just had. I knew it wasn't Jerry on the box after we went through that lamp light on Washington Heights. Lucky I looked through the curtain to make sure."

"Curse that Jerry! He played us false."

"Oh, I don't know. Brady may have hypnotized him."

"Pshaw!"

"I tell you, that old wolf is equal to anything."

Old King Brady smiled at this flattering allusion to his powers.

CHAPTER XVII.

YOUNG KING BRADY IS ON HAND.

"THE best thing we can do is to take the girl aboard the Gretchen as soon as Partland returns with the rest of the gang," Jayne declared.

"I agree with ye," said Mansur. "They ought to be here pretty quick now."

Old King Brady experienced a thrill. He saw the whole game now.

Ike Partland's absence was explained. He had gone after the rest of the gang. They intended to seek retirement for awhile, for the two Bradys had made the scent hot for them.

This convinced the old detective that he must act with swift dispatch. His daring plan was already formed.

It must be executed before the gang should show up. If not he would be defeated, at least for the time.

The old detective's plan was a most daring one. It was his purpose to, if possible, single handed capture these three crooks who were before him.

The German would be easy. But Jayne and Mansur he knew would give savage resistance. But Old

King Brady was not the one to shrink for such a reason as this.

He listened carefully to Jayne's minute detail of the plans. Then he smiled grimly. The next moment he stepped out from his concealment.

In each hand was a revolver.

His sudden appearance was electrifying to the three crooks. Grindleman stared stupidly at the detective. But Jayne and Mansur, with the air of desperate and hunted men, sprang up.

"Hands up or you're dead men!"

"Old King Brady!" gasped Mansur.

"The game is lost!" hissed Jayne.

They were obliged to throw up their hands. The grim smile on the old detective's face seemed to paralyze them.

Old King Brady covered them carefully a moment with the revolver, then he threw a pair of handcuffs on the floor.

"Grindleman," he said, sternly, "snap those on the wrist of each one of those scamps or you die!"

"Ach, mein Gott!" whined the German. "I be von honest man. Spare me!"

"Do as I tell you!"

With alacrity the German obeyed. The famous old detective knew that he had his game cornered, but just as he had begun to congratulate himself upon this score, footsteps sounded outside and the street door was thrown open.

Into the place bounded Ike Partland with the other members of the Black Band at his shoulders. Astounded they halted at the scene spread before them.

"Saved!" cried Jayne in triumph. "Ike! men! Jump on him! Shoot him! Kill him! If you don't we are lost!"

A great hoarse roar went up from the throng of ruffians. Dark looks and threatening gestures they gave the old detective. Old King Brady saw that his life hung in the balance.

But hark!

What was that?

To the old detective's trained ear came a peculiar whistle. It was heard in the street beyond. It was answered from the garden and from the river below. Old King Brady felt a thrill of keenest joy, for he knew that the game was won.

Forgotten was the order of Jayne to spring upon the detective. The outlaws had heard the police

signal also and they had yielded to a literal stampede. But they could not escape.

From all quarters came the bluecoats. The Black Band were cornered like rats in a trap. One by one they yielded and were handcuffed.

It was a mighty turning of tables. The career of the hard gang was ended forever.

Through the crowd Young King Brady's athletic form was seen, and the next moment he was by Old King Brady's side. The two detectives met joyfully.

Young King Brady's story was brief.

He had easily tracked his men, and was shadowing them when Partland's order came for them to concentrate at Grindleman's. At once the young detective called a score of police from headquarters and planned the grand coup which ensued.

Everyone of the band was captured. A short while later they were in prison. The great case was at an end.

The two King Bradys had covered themselves with glory. They had rooted out and destroyed the hardest gang of toughs New York and vicinity had ever known.

As soon as possible Old King Brady repaired to the drug store, where he had left Janet Pell. The young lady had quite come out from the drug, and was able to ride home in the care of two physicians. The next day all New York knew of the rescue of the abducted girl.

Among the most delighted of all at the breaking up of the gang, was James Whittridge, the banker. He sent the Bradys a handsome check as a complimentary acknowledgment of their great ability.

The ringleaders of the gang got long sentences. Melburne Jayne was sent to Sing Sing for twenty years, but suicide terminated his career within a year.

The atrocities of the Black Band are remembered in Gotham to this day. The fame of the Bradys was greatly increased by their capture. The chief of the Secret Service rubbed his hands, and said with great warmth:

"You can't beat the two King Bradys. They are the greatest detectives in America."

And without disputing this statement, let us for the time being, at least, take our leave of the two King Bradys, and bring to its end this story of keen detective work.

[THE END.]

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